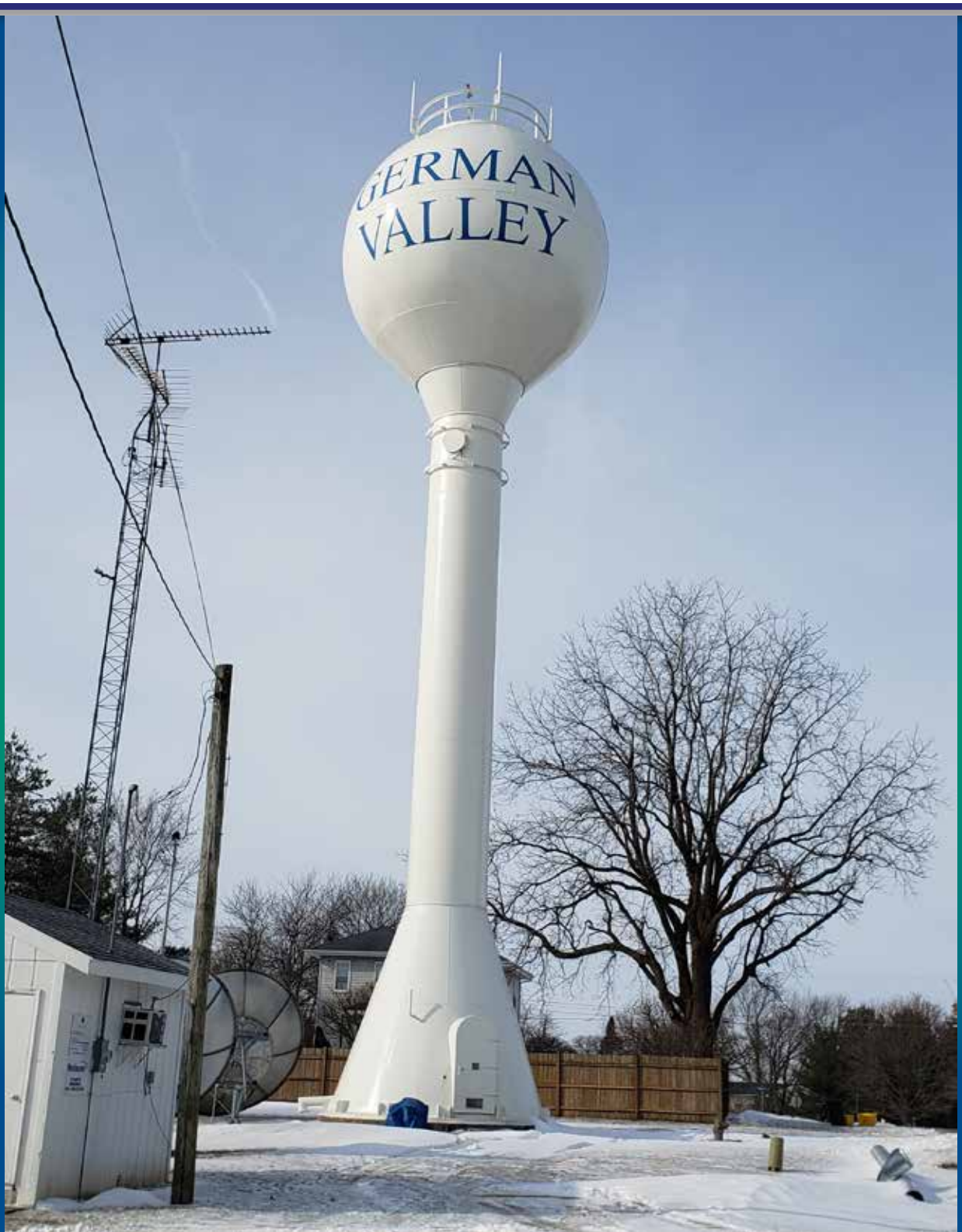
IRWA
ILLINOIS RURAL WATER
ASSOCIATION

Water Ways

Volume XXIII – Winter 2026



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READJUST MANHOLE LIDS TO NEW ELEVATION WHEN RESURFACING

MANHOLE ADJUSTMENT RING

ONLY 4 DIMENSIONS REQUIRED

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2 - thickness of existing lid

3 - riser height (thickness of asphalt matt*)

*Note: minimum riser must be 1/2" more than thickness of existing lid

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* **Eliminates Digging**
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Contact Name _____ **Phone #** _____

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Illinois Rural Water Association

Articles

MISSION STATEMENT

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

On the Cover:

This photo was taken by Jeff McCready, IRWA Wastewater Technician, in German Valley, Illinois.

Water Ways is the official publication of the Illinois Rural Water Association, P.O. Box 49, Taylorville, Illinois 62568, and is published quarterly for distribution to members as well as other industry associations and friends. Our website is www.ilrwa.org. Articles and photographs are encouraged. Advertising and submissions should be mailed to the above address or e-mail us at ilrwadb@ilrwa.org.

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2025: IRWA's Year in Review

by Don Craig,
IRWA Executive Director

At the time of writing this article, 2025 is coming to an end. To say it's been a 'busy'….and somewhat stressful….year for IRWA, would be an understatement.

Early in the year, as a result of and following our annual "Rural Water Rally" at D.C. in February in meeting with Congressional offices, the National Rural Water Association and its state affiliates, including IRWA, were and are very fortunate to have the continued support in Congress from all of our Representatives and Senators, for continuing our funded programs and the good work we do, day in and day out…throughout Illinois and the United States. Many similar organizations, government entities, and others did not fare so well, with the change of administration and the cutbacks made to federal spending.

That unwavering support of Rural Water Associations, is a testament to the validity of who we are and the needed work we do for small, rural community water and wastewater systems across the country! And, it also speaks to the "bang for the buck" our organizations are able to achieve, in accomplishing this never-ending task.

That cycle will be coming back again soon, in February, at this year's Rural Water Rally in D.C. And, again, we will continue push for our needed programs, as well as the water and wastewater funding programs through USDA Rural Development, EPA, and others.

After the Rally in early February of last year, we followed that up the third week of that month, with another very successful annual technical conference in Effingham. We truly appreciate the great ongoing support for that conference, as we know many operators and other system personnel really look forward to coming and attending the sessions and networking with exhibitors and other attendees. We are eager to see all of you, and more, at this year's event!

As the year moved forward, our staff continued to do the very good work they normally do, throughout the state. At the end of May, we did lose one of our staff members, Dave Speagle, as he moved on to another job opportunity. Dave worked our Energy Efficiency Program, and had done well with that task. We hated to see him go, but we were able to fill the position with a new staff member, Steve Stortzum from Louisville, Illinois. Steve had to catch on quickly, and is doing a good job as well, but we urge our members to contact him for the opportunity to conduct a free energy assessment of your water and/or wastewater utilities….and help to show you how to save money by doing so.

Going into late summer, we were notified by NRWA, that we would be receiving funding from USEPA, to reinstate wastewater program(s), that we had the previous year, with our past staffer Kent Cox managing that endeavor. Basically speaking, the position is to work in 3 different specific areas and concerns of wastewater utilities for technical assistance, training, and financing available through the IEPA SRF and other entities. That being said, one of our present Wastewater Techs, Scott Tozier, wanted to, and did move over into that new slot as Wastewater Quality Action Specialist; and he is doing a very good job!

Scott had been working as our southern Wastewater Tech for a number of years. So with him taking over the new program, we had to interview and hire a new staff person to fill that opening. And, after various interviews and delays in doing so, we were able to accomplish that with the hiring of Nick Lawless from Springfield. His start date was January 1st. Please know that he will have a learning 'curve' to go through, adjusting to the job, meeting system personnel, and learning the ropes, so to speak. We hope that all our IRWA member systems' staff, welcome and allow him to be a help to all of you.

And, unfortunately, in October of the year, the federal government shutdown, which not only caused stress for Americans across the country in many different ways, it also affected state rural water associations as well. With the Board's backing and support, IRWA was very fortunate to work through it, with all our staff continuing to provide the necessary assistance and training the best that we could.

These are just 'bumps in the road', so to speak. It's just that some years, those bumps are higher, and the lows are lower. Yet, as someone who has been around for over 40 years working with Rural Water….we have always come through, and will continue to make sure that we do so, in the years to come. But, to do so, we always need the support of our system members throughout the state. With IRWA's, and all those in other rural water state associations, that membership gives us the power, validity, and recognition to sustain what NRWA has been doing for FIFTY YEARS!

Yes, 2026 marks the 50th year of the National Rural Water Association's inception! In three more years, Illinois Rural Water Association will be celebrating ours!

Eddy Hydrants

by Chuck Woodworth,
IRWA Circuit Rider

I recently received a call to help find a possible leak issue within a community water system. I asked the same questions that I always ask…. "How long has it been this high, did it start all of sudden or slowly get to where it's at"… and so on. When I was onsite, I had a few more questions. I ask these questions to gain information on a possible reason for the loss or where to start looking for it. In this case I asked about any low pressure or dirty water complaints from customers. The operator did say that one person has complained about dirty water in the past. I felt that this would be a good location to start our search.

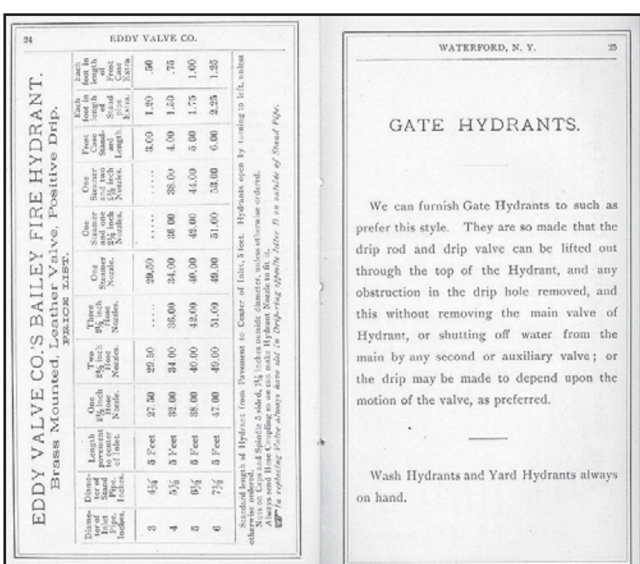
We drove to the customers address to start checking the area for leak sounds. I found that I had left my leak locator turned on and the batteries were dead. I normally carry extra batteries with me but none could be found. The operator drove to get some new batteries for me. Thanks again if you are reading this. I installed the new batteries and began listening to area hydrants, meter sets and/ or curb stop valves. The customer with the dirty water complaint, had no leak sounds anywhere around her house.

When I'm listening to a hydrant, I always look over the hydrant looking for missing caps, date of manufacture, if the operating nut has been used recently, was a hydrant wrench used or a pipe wrench and other stuff. I noticed that most of the hydrants we went to were made by the Eddy Valve Company. The manufactured date on most of those was 1940 or 1941. I don't remember how many hydrants I listened to that day, but almost all the Eddy hydrants had either a small leak sound or bigger leak sounds. Finding all those hydrants leaking made me want to research more into the Eddy Valve Company hydrants.

I found on google that the Eddy Valve Company of Waterford New York was established in 1847. The company started by making modifications to the Bailey fire hydrant by improving on the dry barrel type. Thomas R. Bailey Jr's historical hydrant patent with a casing design to prevent freezing damage. Eddy Valve took this patent and made significant changes to the design. The most significant change was the operating stem was threaded into the valve which was located below ground (Note pic #1). The changes to the Bailey hydrant were completed and manufacturing of this design began in 1865. The 1886 price list is picture #2. You could get a 6" inlet pipe with two 2.5" nozzles for only $49.00. What a bargain compared to today's prices! But,

continued on page 9

pic # 1



24 EDDY VALVE CO.

EDDY VALVE CO.'S BAILEY FIRE HYDRANT.
Brass Mounted, Leather Valve, Positive Drip.
PRICE LIST.

Diameter of Inlet Pipe, Inches.	Diameter of Stand Pipe, Inches.	Length pavement to center of Inlet.	One 2½ inch Hose Nozzle.	Two 2½ inch Hose Nozzles.	Three 2½ inch Hose Nozzles.	One Steamer Nozzle.	One Steamer and one 2½ inch Nozzles.	One Steamer and two 2½ inch Nozzles.	Frost Case Stand. and Length.	Each foot in length of Stand Pipe Extra.	Each foot in length of Frost Case Extra.
3	4½	5 Feet	27.50	29.50	.....	29.50	.....	.....	3.00	1.20	.50
4	5½	5 Feet	32.00	34.00	36.00	34.00	36.00	38.00	4.00	1.50	.75
5	6½	5 Feet	38.00	40.00	42.00	40.00	48.00	44.00	5.00	1.75	1.00
6	7½	5 Feet	47.00	49.00	51.00	49.00	51.00	53.00	6.00	2.25	1.25

Standard length of Hydrant from Pavement to Center of Inlet, 5 feet. Hydrants open by turning to left, unless otherwise ordered.
Nuts on Caps and Spindle 5 sided, 1⅝ inches outside diameter, unless otherwise ordered.
Always send Hose Coupling so we can make Hydrant Nozzle to fit it.
☞ *In replacing Valve always have slot in Drip-ring opposite letter D on outside of Stand Pipe.*

WATERFORD, N. Y. 25

GATE HYDRANTS.

We can furnish Gate Hydrants to such as prefer this style. They are so made that the drip rod and drip valve can be lifted out through the top of the Hydrant, and any obstruction in the drip hole removed, and this without removing the main valve of Hydrant, or shutting off water from the main by any second or auxiliary valve; or the drip may be made to depend upon the motion of the valve, as preferred.

Wash Hydrants and Yard Hydrants always on hand.

pic # 2

Bridging the Gap: Innovative Tools for Sustainable Infrastructure Financing

by Nick Roederer, Managing Director, Raymond James & Associates, Inc.

Financing infrastructure projects is essential to the economic and social vitality of communities across the United States, particularly in rural areas. Quality infrastructure—such as water and sewer systems, roads, bridges, schools, and fire stations—forms the backbone of local communities. In rural America, where populations are more dispersed and private investment is often limited, public financing tools like municipal bonds and innovative financing programs play a crucial role in bridging the funding gap. These investments not only improve day-to-day life for residents but also make rural regions more attractive for businesses, helping to retain local jobs and spur new economic opportunities.

Bridging this gap necessitates strategic financial investments, and that's where the significance of financing tools like the Rural Water Financing Agency ("RWFA") comes into play. RWFA is a public agency headquartered in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and its primary function is to mobilize financial resources for governmental projects. Raymond James serves as Bond Underwriter for the RWFA Interim Program and as Municipal Advisor for the RWFA Flex Term Program. My fellow colleagues at Raymond James and I have worked with RWFA and its predecessor (Kentucky Rural Water Finance Corporation) since 1995 to finance more than 800 projects for over $1.8 billion. The RWFA and Raymond James are committed to providing borrowers with quick access to affordable infrastructure financing in my home state of Kentucky and throughout the country.

The Rural Water Financing Agency plays a pivotal role in mobilizing financial resources from various channels, including the municipal bond market, to offer funds that can be strategically deployed for a variety of projects. The RWFA funding is available through its two financing programs to governmental borrowers throughout the country:

RWFA Interim Program

- Provides tax-exempt construction financing to borrowers with a USDA Takeout
- Streamlined and efficient application and documentation
- Fixed rate for the term of construction
- All costs included in the loan rate
- All interest is capitalized until the end of construction

RWFA Flex Term Program

- AA- rated program offers borrowers access to tax-exempt markets at low rates
- No debt service reserve requirement
- Fixed rate terms from 1-30 years for a variety of project types
- Funding can be provided in 60-120 days (depending on regulatory requirements)
- Projects not subject to federal regulations (BABA Act, American Iron and Steel, Davis Bacon)

The RWFA Flex Term Program has been particularly active recently as communities have determined that financing their projects quickly and without some of the federal regulations (BABA Act, American Iron and Steel, etc.) is most beneficial to them. Just in 2025 the RWFA Flex Term Program issued over $150,000,000 to fund 36 projects in 11 states. The upcoming December 2025 issuance is expected to provide approximately $70,000,000 in financing to nine projects in seven states. This increasing momentum has led to a variety of projects being financed by RWFA around the country such as water and sewer improvements, a new library, fire trucks and fire station renovations, a new parking facility, a new multi-purpose event center, healthcare facility improvements, a new correctional facility, school building improvements, land purchases, and refinancing.

These RWFA Flex Term loans have been secured by revenues, general obligation pledges, special obligation pledges or other tax revenues. This flexibility ensures that the unique challenges faced by different communities are addressed and fostered by a more effective, efficient and consistent financing approach.

Furthermore, the Rural Water Financing Agency plays a pivotal role in leveraging partnerships and collaboration. By facilitating alliances with governmental bodies and state rural water associations, RWFA amplifies its impact and creates a network of support for infrastructure projects. To date, RWFA has partnered with 19 state rural water associations that are contributing to enhancing the financial resources available to borrowers in their states.

Strategic infrastructure investment is about resilience and the future. Well-financed projects strengthen a community's ability to withstand and recover from natural disasters, economic downturns, and demographic shifts. Financing tools such as the ones that RWFA provides allow local governments to plan beyond short election cycles and focus on projects that will serve residents for generations. In rural America, where every dollar must stretch further, thoughtful infrastructure financing is not just an economic necessity, it's an investment in future generations, connectivity, and the enduring strength of community life.

RWFA and Raymond James pride ourselves on being able to provide financing to borrowers quickly and efficiently and it all starts with a simple application. Please visit the website at www.ruralwaterfinance.com to learn more and to fill out your application for financing.

Raymond James & Associates, Inc. serves as underwriter to the Interim Loan Program and municipal advisor to the Flex Term Program. This overview may not be representative of the experience of other clients and is not a guarantee of future performance or success. Past performance is not indicative of future results. The information contained herein is solely intended to facilitate discussion of potentially applicable financing applications and is not intended to be a specific buy/sell recommendation, nor is it an official confirmation of terms. The information contained herein has been obtained from sources considered to be reliable, but we do not guarantee the foregoing material is accurate or complete.

Out with the Old and In with the New

by Evan Jones,
IRWA Director of Field Staff Programs/ Circuit Rider

"Out with the old, in with the new" is an expression that refers to moving on and making changes in life. The expression is quite literal: You'd use it to refer to changing things in your life and replacing some old things for newer ones. (https://grammarhow.com/out-with-the-old-in-with-the-new-meaning/) Happy New Year! We all can do a little out with the old and in with the new.

That being said, the Village of New Holland has constructed a new water tower. Now that isn't that interesting, but the fact that right now, just 7 miles away, the City of Mason City has a new tower under construction. Both communities will have new water towers for 2026!

New Holland is in Logan County and has a population of 275 residents, with 134 service connections. They provide water from 3 wells, for a Class C facility.

The old water tower in New Holland was constructed in 1957. It is a multi-column elevated storage tank with a wooden tank. It is 115 feet tall at the bottom of the tank and holds 60,000 gallons. The contractor was Caldwell Tanks Inc.

New Holland's new tower was constructed in 2025. It is a multi-column double ellipsoidal elevated storage tank. It is 141 feet to the overflow. It has a capacity of 60,000 gallons. The engineer for the project was Milano & Grunloh out of Effingham, Illinois. It was constructed by Caldwell Tanks Inc.

Mason City is in Mason County; and has a population of 2558, with 1080 service connections. They produce water from a Class B pressure filter plant supplied by 3 wells. Previously they were only classified as a Class C facility until they constructed the new plant in 2009.

The old water tower in Mason City was constructed in 1945. It is a multi-column double ellipsoidal elevated storage tank. It is 75 feet tall at the bottom of the tank and holds 125,000 gallons. Height to the overflow is 102 feet. The engineer was J.J. Woltmann of Bloomington Illinois.

Mason City's new tower was constructed in 2025. It is a single pedestal support, with a spheroid tank on top. It is 107 feet to the overflow. It has a capacity of 500,000 gallons. The engineer for the project is Tim Sumner of CMT (Crawford, Murphy & Tilly). It was constructed by CB & I (formerly Chicago Bridge and Iron). An interesting fact is, this will be the third new tower for the City of Mason City. The original tower was a brick foundation with a steel tank on top.

The construction of these new towers is a large undertaking for these communities. The sizing and height of these new towers are going to ensure adequate storage and pressure…as well as firefighting capabilities. These new storage tanks start a new era of providing safe and dependable drinking water for these communities. Have a happy New Year everyone!

(Photo of New Holland by Evan Jones)
(Photo of Mason City courtesy of Denny Fortney and his drone of Havana.)

Eddy Hydrants

continued from page 5

everything is relative to price in the specific time period.

A few more design changes were made in 1870. This became known as the Eddy Valve Company List 90 model. It was available in several nozzle configurations. It could be purchased with one, two or three 2.5" nozzles, one steamer, one steamer and one 2.5" or one steamer with two 2.5" with six different nozzle configurations. The two 2.5" nozzles were the most popular (pic #3). See pictures of the various nozzle configurations. The early style logo (pic #4), can be found on the barrel of the hydrant. Inside the circle is the letters EV. Below the "snowflake" badge is the patent date of Nov. 8, 1892. What makes this design hard to open and close is the threads in the valve. If these hydrants were installed in 1940, 84 years later, without lubrication on the threads is the reason why. As for the hydrants leaking various amounts…again they are 84 years old or older.

James B. Clow & Sons was founded in 1878, initially dealing in iron pipe and foundry products used in the water industry, later expanding to become a major manufacturer and distributor of valves and fire hydrants. Clow & Sons became a distributor for Eddy Valve Company in 1890. With Clow & Sons selling Eddy Valve company's list 90 model hydrants and valves with the iron pipe they manufactured, Clow & Sons was able to expand once again. In the 1940's Eddy Valve Company and Iowa valve company was acquired by James B. Clow & Sons. Clow & Sons later changed its name to Clow Valve Company, in 1985 was acquired by McWane Inc., and still operates today as the Clow Valve Company.

Today's hydrant manufacturers, have all been influenced by the original Eddy dry barrel model list 90 hydrant. With modifications and improvements along the way, hopefully the newer hydrant models will last longer than 84 years.

A New Face for IRWA Energy Efficiency

by Steve Stortzum, IRWA Energy Efficiency Circuit Rider

Happy New Year, Rural Water! My name is Steve Stortzum and I am Illinois Rural Water's Energy Efficiency Technician. My home base is in Louisville, Illinois. My hometown, where I was born and raised, is where I am currently raising my family. I am married to my wife Emily, who is originally from Flora, IL, and we currently have three children, Molly Ann (11), Cameron Wayne (6), and Hattie Faye (2). I graduated from North Clay High School in 2001 and have worn many hats, such as school bus driver, caregiver, business owner, salesman, and village clerk/administrator. I started my current job with Illinois Rural Water in July 2025. I could not say enough about how proud I am to work for this organization and how welcoming the administrators, staff, and board members have been to me. Until I started working for Illinois Rural Water, I did not realize how many services our organization offered. The program I work under aims to help communities save money by reducing their electricity costs through energy savings. I want to explain a little about how our Energy Efficiency Program works.

First and foremost, an energy audit performed by Illinois Rural Water is free of cost to the community! Our goal is to help your community save money by reducing its overall energy consumption. The audit consists of a one-hour walkthrough of each facility. During the visit, questions are asked about operations and equipment, such as motor size, run time, and daily cycles, and photos may be taken to document conditions. Facilities are asked to provide one to two hours of time to answer questions and at least one recent energy bill for each location. The evaluation may include motors, pumps, blowers, HVAC systems, electrical panels, building envelopes, process controls, and any other areas you would like reviewed. The final assessment provides clear recommendations for reducing energy use, estimated project costs, expected savings, and payback periods. Visual tools such as graphs are included to illustrate projected savings. The assessment also outlines available funding options, including programs from the National Rural Water Association, the IEPA State Revolving Loan Fund, USDA Rural Development, the Rural Water Financing Authority, and utility providers. Each funding source has specific benefits and eligibility requirements, making it important to match the option to the facility's size and needs.

I look forward to meeting all of you as I travel the state, working to save communities through their energy costs. If your community is looking to have an energy audit conducted, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at 618-335-1474 or email me at stortzum@ilrwa.org.

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44th Annual Technical Conference
February 17-19, 2026
Mindful Momentum
IRWA
ILLINOIS RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
Attendee Information
Keller Convention Center - Effingham, IL

Host Hotel SOLD OUT!

HOST HOTEL

Holiday Inn
1301 Ave. of Mid-America
Effingham, IL
Phone: 217-540-7777
$130.00 + tax per night

Auxiliary Hotel

LaQuinta
1103 Ave of Mid America
Phone: 217-540-1111

Auxiliary Hotel

Country Inn & Suites
1200 N. Raney St.
Phone: 217-540-5555

Auxiliary Hotel

Holiday Inn Express
1604 Fayette Ave
217-994-9949

Auxiliary Hotel

Best Western-Delta Inn
1509 Hampton Drive
217-342-4499

Auxiliary Hotel

Hampton Inn & Suites
1305 N Keller Dr
217-540-5050

CONFERENCE LOCATION

The conference will be held at the Thelma Keller Convention Center located at 1202 N. Keller Dr. The convention center is attached to the host hotel.

REGISTRATION

Registration & badges are required for all conference attendees. Please register each attendee using the registration form included.

Pre-Registration:

To pre-register complete the registration form and mail with payment to:

IRWA, PO Box 49, Taylorville, IL 62568

To pay on-line with your credit card, go to www.ilrwa.org and click on the conference link on the home page under Upcoming Events.

CONFIRMATIONS OF REGISTRATION WILL NOT BE SENT!

Pre-registration must be postmarked by February 6, 2026.

On-Site Registration:

All conference attendees must obtain a name badge and conference material at the registration desk. If you do not pre-register, please make sure that you register as soon as possible after you arrive at the Keller Convention Center. Please note that on-site registration is $25.00 higher than pre-registration. ***Registrations received after the pre-registration deadline are considered on-site.***

An event membership of one-cent per person is included in your registration fee(s) allowing participants in NRWA fundraising activities. This is required by Federal Election Commission laws. If you wish to opt-out, please go to the registration booth at the conference for your refund of this one-cent fee.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

Refunds will only be given in the event of emergencies. We must have a written notice of cancellation to issue a refund. You may e-mail Heather—ilrwahm@ilrwa.org.

REGISTRATION HOURS

Pre-Registration PICK UP ONLY
Monday, February 16 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Regular Registration Hours
Tuesday, February 17 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 18 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

EXHIBIT HALL

Over 100 companies from all areas of the water and wastewater industry will be on hand to help solve your problems and provide you with the information you need to make those crucial decisions.

The exhibit hall will be open during the following hours:

Tuesday, February 17 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 18 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Exhibitors Hospitality Night

Tuesday, February 17 4:45 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
All food and beverages for the evening is provided by our exhibitors.

Pub Crawl

Tuesday, February 17 7:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.
Thank you to the Effingham Tourism Department for their continued support of the pub crawl! The buses will begin picking up at the Holiday Inn at the conclusion of Hospitality Night.

Casino Night

Wednesday, February 18 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

CERTIFICATION EXAMS

State certification exams for water and wastewater will be given on Thursday, February 19, 2026 beginning at 8:30 a.m. They are available for attendees and non-attendees alike.

- You must have a valid **Letter of Admission** issued by the IEPA. You **must** bring the Letter of Admission and a photo ID.
- There are no conference fees associated with the exam. If you are only taking the exam (not attending the conference) ***Please submit a registration form circling the exam you will be taking to ensure that enough materials are on hand.***
- If you are only coming to the conference for the overview and will be taking the exam on Thursday, you may sign up for a Wednesday only registration and circle the exam you will be taking.

44th Annual Technical Conference

February 17-19, 2026

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete one form for each attendee

Make check payable to: Illinois Rural Water Association
P.O. Box 49, Taylorville, IL 62568
You may also pay on-line at www.ilrwa.org with a credit card

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

SYSTEM: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

FULL REGISTRATION: (Includes technical sessions, exhibit hall, meals & activities for all 3 days)

☐ Member—$190.00 ☐ Spouse—$190.00 ☐ Non-Member—$240.00

ONE DAY REGISTRATION: (Includes technical sessions, exhibit hall, meals & activities for 1 day only)

☐ Member—$165.00 ☐ Spouse—$165.00 ☐ Non-Member—$215.00

PLEASE CIRCLE WHICH DAY YOU WILL BE ATTENDING (for one day registration only)

TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY

WATER CERTIFICATION EXAM—PLEASE CIRCLE WHICH EXAM YOU ARE TAKING *(if applicable)*

CLASS A CLASS B CLASS C CLASS D

WASTEWATER CERTIFICATION EXAM—PLEASE CIRCLE WHICH EXAM YOU ARE TAKING *(if applicable)*

CLASS I CLASS II CLASS III CLASS IV

Registrations must be postmarked by February 6, 2026 to receive pre-registration pricing.

All registrations received after this date are considered on-site and will be charged an additional $25.00

All fees must be paid when registering

- ***No purchase orders or special billings accepted***
- ***Confirmations of registration will not be sent***
- **NO REFUNDS AFTER FEBRUARY 6, 2026**

Have a Question?
Call 1-800-762-3547

Conference At A Glance

Tuesday, February 17 - Registration Open: 8:00 a.m.— 4:00 p.m.			**4.5 Water Credit/3.5 WW Credit Hours**
9:00 a.m.	Opening Session/Awards Ceremony/Rural Development Update*		
10:00 a.m.	***Break/Exhibit Hall Opens***		
	WATER	**WASTEWATER**	**BREAKOUT**
11:00 a.m.	Meet the IEPA*		
12:00 p.m.	***Lunch Buffet—Ticket Required***		
1:00 p.m.	J.U.L.I.E. Mandatory Positive Response System*	Lagoon Fine Bubble Improvement	Protecting Our Waterways: Managing Runoff and Environmental Responsibility
1:45 p.m.	PFAS Remediation in Drinking Water: 3 Case Study Alternatives	A Surprise Discovery: Using a Hydraulic Model to Better Understand Your Collection System	Advanced Metering Technology
2:30 p.m.	***Break/Exhibitor Drawings***		
3:00 p.m.	Level Up from Binders: Affordable & Accessible Asset & Maintenance Management	BMP's to Reduce Nutrients	Billing Software
3:45 p.m.	Prepare for the Unexpected*	Metering for Wastewater Professionals	Optimizing Field Operations with Smart Mapping & Data Driven Workflows*
4:30 p.m.	Water Taste Test		Annual Meeting
Wednesday, February 18 - Registration Open: 8:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m.			**5.5 Water or WW Credit Hours**
8:00 a.m.	***Exhibit Hall Opens***		
9:00 a.m.	Factors to Consider When Pondering a Filter Media Replacement	Sand Filters	Water Math Review (9:00—11:00)
9:45 a.m.	Handling and Disposal of Water Treatment Residuals *	Phased Assessment Strategy for Sewers	
10:30 a.m.	***Break/Exhibitor Drawings***		
11:00 a.m.	IEPA Regs and Policy Update		
12:00 p.m.	***Lunch Buffet***		
1:00 p.m.	Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention	Understanding Inflow and Infiltration	Disinfection Review and Wells Review
1:45 p.m.	Update on PFAS Litigation	Pilot Testing ANITA Mox at Urbana and Champaign Sanitary District	
2:30 p.m.	***Break/Exhibitor Drawings***		
3:00 p.m.	Optimizing Protective Coating Projects: From Specification to Completion	Manhole and Lift Station Rehabilitation	Sequestration/Oxidation Review (2:45—4:00)
3:45 p.m.	Trenchless Technologies for Pipe Repair and Rehabilitation*	Lagoon Life: With and Without Enzymes	
Thursday, February 19			**3 Water/2.25 WW Credit Hours**
7:30 a.m.	***Breakfast Buffet—Convention Center C & D***		
8:30 a.m.	WaterISAC: Cyber Resilience for Rural Water and Wastewater Systems. .	***WASTEWATER CERTIFICATION EXAM Roosevelt Room*** (until 11:30)	***WATER CERTIFICATION EXAM Convention Center A & B*** (until 1:30)
9:15 a.m.	CCR and Public Notification Updates		
10:00 a.m.	***Break***		
10:15 a.m.	OSHA 101 Inspection*		
11:00 a.m.			
11:45 a.m.	***Closing Ceremony/ Grand Prize Drawing***		

Sessions At A Glance

WATER SESSIONS

Rural Development Update - Julie Hatfield, RD – Julie will give an update on any new happenings at Rural Development.

Meet the IEPA - IEPA Staff– Many changes to the IEPA staff have occurred in the past few years. Come to this session to meet the staff and what they can do for you.

J.U.L.I.E. Mandatory Positive Response System – Roger Watwood; J.U.L.I.E., Inc. – Starting January 1, 2026, all JULIE member companies and excavators must utilize JULIE's Positive Response System. Learn what that entails and the options for compliance with the law.

PFAS Remediation in Drinking Water: 3 Case Study Alternatives - Mike Buzicky; MSA Professional Services. - Case Studies of 3 PFAS remediation projects for Municipal Drinking Water Systems. Remediation alternatives, before and after metrics, and overall status of current PFAS regulations and funding.

Level Up from Binders: Affordable & Accessible Asset & Maintenance Management —Chris Sosnowski; Waterly - Learn how to both build a simple DIY asset register and how to ask intelligent questions if you are considering software to help.

Prepare for the Unexpected - Kim Cole; Drop Collaborative & Sarah Towle; C & C Pumps - A discussion of how to prepare, report, and respond to emergencies for utilities.

Factors to Consider When Pondering a Filter Media Replacement—Jim Groose; Watersurplus - Review different filter media including underbedding gravels, filter media like sand, anthracite and catalytic filter media, and adsorption media like Granular Activated Carbon, PFAS anion resins, and arsenic adsorption media.

Handling and Disposal of Water Treatment Residuals —Cheryl Head; IEMA/Office of Homeland Security –Discussion on the history of water treatment residuals regulations, which facilities are impacted and the requirements of the new rule, 32 Illinois Administrative Code Part 622.

IEPA Regs and Policy Updates– Matt Maas; IEPA - This session will get you up to date on new regs and policies coming down from EPA.

Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention - Brad Kempski; Mid-Continent—Learn key terminology, understand the importance of backflow preventers in safeguarding drinking water & become familiar with essential concepts for maintaining water system integrity.

Update on PFAS Litigation—Hank Naughton & Sam Wade; Napoli Shkolnik Law - Includes all systems tested under UCMR5 and are getting their results back currently. Also making systems aware of potential settlements under CERLA and potential litigation for 1.4 Dioxane microplastics and firefighter turn-out gear.

Optimizing Protective Coating Projects: From Specification to Completion - Kevin Zei & Sean Meracle; The Sherwin Williams Company– Successful coating projects require more than selecting the right material—they demand a comprehensive strategy that integrates technical rigor and effective team collaboration. Explore best practices for improving project outcomes.

Trenchless Technologies for Pipe Repair and Rehabilitation—David Mosier; Core and Main- Trenchless technologies provide innovative solutions that offer numerous advantages, including reduced environmental impact, cost savings, and faster project completion.

WaterISAC: Cyber Resilience for Rural Water and Wastewater Systems...Not as Scary or Expensive as it Seems—Jennifer Lyn Walker; WaterISAC—Basic (no-cost and low-cost) actions that rural utilities can do (**and stop doing**) to improve cyber resilience at their systems.

CCR's and Public Notification Updates—Mary Reed; IRWA - Breaking down several of the FAQ's how to properly put together your CCR and the latest updates on other public notifications.

OSHA 101 Inspection- Joseph Thomas; OSHA - Excavation Safety and other inspection topics

WASTEWATER SESSIONS

Lagoon Fine Bubble Improvements - John Hinde; Air Diffusion Systems - Hear about how fine bubble improvements can help you in your new or existing facilities.

A Surprise Discovery: Using a Hydraulic Model to Better Understand Your Collection System - David Ecklund; Burns & McDonnell– Case study of Decatur Sanitary District as a case study example to highlight ways a collection system hydraulic model can lead to a better understanding of capacity and operations in your system.

BMPs to Reduce Nutrients - Kim Cole; Drop Collaborative— Describing how wastewater utilities, the agricultural community, landowners, manufacturing industries, and even residents impact nutrient contributions to our local streams and ultimately the Gulf Hypoxic Zone.

Metering for Wastewater Professionals—John Rigdon; Hach - Using a meter and probe to measure pH, DO and other common parameters.

Sand Filter Troubleshooting - Robert Risley; Water Treat Technology—We will discuss the purpose, design and solutions for sand filters.

Phased Assessment Strategy for Sewers - Brad Franklin & Kevin Foppe; Key Equipment - Various methods for inspecting sewer lines. Strategies for small to large municipalities will be discussed.

Understanding Inflow and Infiltration - Jonathan Younger; VisuSewer What is it and how does it effect a Sanitary Sewer System.

Manhole and Lift Station Rehabilitation - Jonathan Younger; VisuSewer - Navigating the maze of product choices.

Pilot Testing ANITA Mox at Urbana and Champaign Sanitary District – Wade Lagle; Donohue & Associates – UCSD's successful pilot highlights the effectiveness of anammox-based side stream treatment in achieving these goals and the results, next steps, and lessons learned will be outlined in the conference presentation.

Lagoon Life: With and Without Enzymes - Jack Wissmiller; Essence Chemical - The case for enzyme use on sludge reduction.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Protecting Our Waterways: Managing Runoff and Environmental Responsibility—Lee Edington; E-Environmental Services. - Highlights to clean water act compliance, IEPA reporting requirements and best management policies for mitigating pollution.

Advanced Metering Technology– Devin Peterson; E.J. Prescott - Advanced metering technology, particularly the use of ultrasonic water meter data, enhances our capability to detect water main leaks. Learn how in this session.

Billing Software—Daniel Brown; United Systems & Software - Advanced solutions for the modern utility and customer.

Optimizing Field Operations with Smart Mapping & Data Driven Workflows - Jeremy Linley; Civil Design - Best practices through a few project use cases for planning, organizing and completing field activities for both water and wastewater using an interactive smart mapping and data-driven workflows.

Water Math Overview—TBD; ERTC - Always a popular session. Math you can use to pass your certification test!

Disinfection Review and Wells Review—TBD; ERTC - An overview on disinfection and wells to assist you in passing your exam.

Sequestration/Oxidation Review - TBD; ERTC - New topic for the reviews this year. Another review for exam assistance.

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You can find the link to our Facebook page on our website at www.ilrwa.org.

(Winners are limited to winning one time per year)

What are you looking for? - The ABC's of ilrwa.org

Advertising in Water Ways information (Ad agreement and links) - Publications > Advertising Information

Apprenticeship—Resources > Apprenticeship

Becoming a Certified Water/Wastewater Operator—Resources > Becoming a Certified Operator in Illinois

Boil Order Notice—Resources > Downloads

CCR—Services > CCR's

Certification Overview from IRWA—Training > Certification

Certified Water/Wastewater Operator Contract—Resources > Downloads

CEU Forms from webinars or conferences—Training > CEU Form Archives

Compliance Assistance—Services > Compliance Assistance

Cross Connection (manual, survey & ordinance) - Resources > Cross Connection

Current hot topics and upcoming events - Home

Energy Efficiency Assessment—Services > Energy Efficiency

For Sale/Wanted—Resources > Classifieds (to submit something—e-mail Heather: ilrwahm@ilrwa.org)

Forming a new water district—Resources > Downloads

GPS/GIS—Services > GPS/GIS Mapping

Industry Organizations—Resources > Links

Job Board—Resources > Job Board

Lead Information —Resources > Lead Information

Leak checklist and how much am I losing flyers—Resources > Downloads

Legislative Information – (Who is my rep?, Bills that IRWA is following)—Resources > Legislative

Mutual Aid—Resources > Downloads

Nitrification Action Plan Information—Resources > Nitrification Action Planning

NFP Tax Forms — Resources > Downloads

NRWA Fleet - Membership > Benefits—click on the NRWA logo

Operator Groups—Resources > Links

PFAS—Home > Hot Topics

Rate Study— Services > Rate Study

Red Flag Act—Resources > Downloads

Speaker Request Form for Conference —Training > Conferences

Tracer Wire Specs—Resources > Downloads

ERP/Contingency Plans—Resources > Emergency Preparedness Planning

Video Inspection Services—Services > Video Inspection

Water Loss Handouts—Resources > Downloads

WATER TREAT TECHNOLOGY

Wastewater Treatment for Manufacturers and Municipalities

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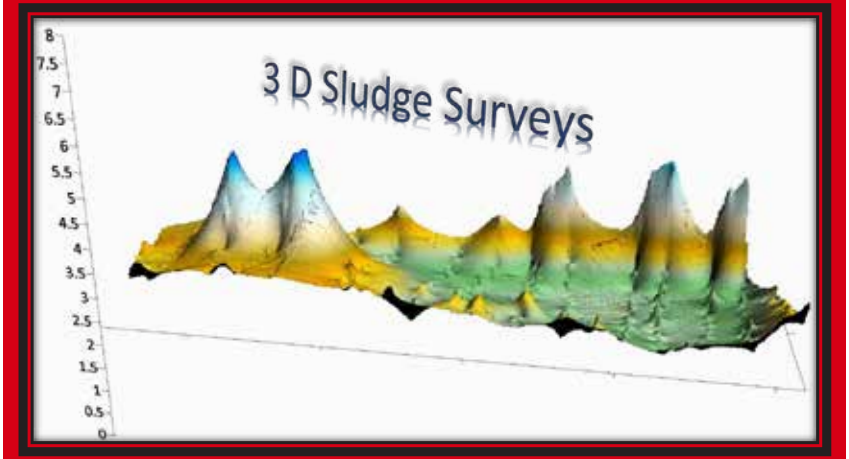

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PFAS Cost Recovery Program

Phase 2

In partnership with the National Rural Water Association and Napoli Shkolnik PLLC, we are sharing this call to action with you concerning the Phase 2 Settlement Deadline for the PFAS Cost Recovery Program.

Is this supported by our Association?

Yes, this program was initiated in 2018 when National Rural Water Association engaged the law firm of Napoli Shkolnik to file litigation on behalf of its members and all public water supplies. We encourage your system to register into the settlement to lessen the financial burden on your system and rate payers.

The Issue

Gain access to $15.4 Billion Dollar Settlement for PFAS Detections. Systems must register to receive this funding. There is zero cost to register into the program.

Who is Eligible?

Any public water system that has tested and found detections of ANY PFAS chemical, at any level, is eligible to receive an award from this settlement based on level of detection and maximum daily flows. This includes all 29 PFAS compounds included in the UCMR5 monitoring rule.

Deadlines and Urgency

3M/DuPont Settlements

- Phase 1 of the 3M/Dupont settlement has ended.
- Phase 2 - systems that tested after June 22, 2023.
  The deadline to register in the program to be eligible for the settlement is **July 12, 2026.**

Additional Settlements

- Twelve other companies are in the settlement process with no set deadlines yet. It is important to note that once you have signed up for the PFAS Cost Recovery Program, Napoli Shkolnik will ensure your system is included in all applicable settlements.

Cost
There is zero cost to register into the settlement program. If your system does not receive an award there are no costs to the utility.

How much will my utility recieve?
The amount will depend on the level of detection, the compound detected, and maximum daily flows.

Unrestricted Funds
There are no strings attached to the funding your system receives; the decision to utilize funds is at the discretion of the utility. There are no approvals or reporting requirements.

NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
NRWA *America's Largest Utility Membership*

NAPOLI SHKOLNIK PLLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

PFAS Detects

Many systems have tested postive for PFAS across the nation. Time is of the essence, act now and protect your utility and ratepayers from the costs of PFAS remediation and treatment. To date, Napoli Shkolnik Law Firm has recovered:

$160M

$160,168,505.50 in settlements

314

Rural Water Members

Estimated Awards

Awards based on level of detections and maximum daily flows

	3M	Dupont	Tyco	Additional Settlements
High	$28,771,300	$3,409,409	$2,167,854	Ongoing
Low	$3,824	$453	$286	Ongoing
Average	$1,607,481	$169,368	$129,076	Ongoing

Additional Information

Register your system into the settlement at **www.napolilaw.com/nrwa-pfas**
There is no obligation. Hank Naughton or Sam Wade with Napoli Shkolnik will contact you to provide additional details and answer any questions you may have.

Is someone available to meet with our board/council?
Napoli Shkolnik welcomes the opportunity to connect with your board/council, staff or legal representative just give them a call or email.

Documentation

In order to participate in these settlements, public water systems need to submit four different forms to the Claims Administrator:

01	A completed IRS Form W-9.
02	Any evidence of any remedial action taken for PFAS.
03	Documents showing the maximum flow rate per source.
04	Documents showing the maximum permitted flow rate per source.

Contact

- **Sam Wade, Water Consultant**
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  580-917-1425
- **Hank Naughton, Managing Partner**
  hnaughton@napolilaw.com
  978-852-3643

Looking to Learn More?

You can visit NRWA's website by scanning the QR Code below to learn more about the PFAS Cost Recovery Program and PFAS in general.

Winter Operation of Elevated Storage

by Marc Lemrise, IRWA Apprenticeship Training Instructor

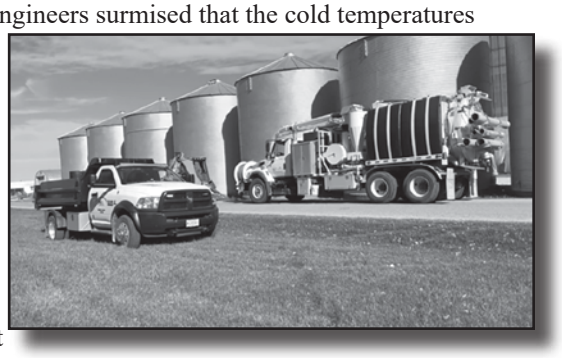
Winter is back. And with it, all of the difficulties and stress it causes for those of us responsible for keeping the faucets running. Leaks are more frequent and repairing them in sub-zero weather is just no fun, to say the least.

Anyone with overhead storage, knows that a layer of ice will form all around the inside walls of your water tower. This ice layer does provide a certain degree of insulation for the water in the center. It doesn't amount to much. A foot of solid ice has roughly the same insulating value of a ¾-inch pine board. Anytime the water is replenished, the new water entering the tank will increase the temperature a few degrees, preventing that water from freezing. Water being used, even at the lowest flows, provides movement and prevents freezing. Most older elevated storage tanks were of the "common riser" variety. This arrangement involved supporting the tank with structural "legs" and feeding the "bowl" via one very large pipe. Since this pipe is the only connection to the distribution system, incoming water and discharged water utilize the same path, providing movement regardless of the direction of flow. Tanks using this technology are highly resistant to freezing. The pipe usually has an internal ladder and access hatch at the base.

The main disadvantage to a common riser tower is lack of mixing. The newest water stays at the bottom in summer months as it is the coldest and the warmer water at the top of the bowl ages, leading to chlorine depletion and increased risk of disinfection by-product formation. Without installing a mixer, the solution was to install a dual riser system. Through the use of check valves, one pipe fills the tower, and a different pipe drains it. The fill pipe may extend ten feet above the tank bottom, placing the new water closer to the top. This provides mixing and prevents water stagnation in warmer months. The drain pipe protrudes barely a foot higher than the tank bottom; just enough to prevent settled solids from entering.

One of the systems that I managed, had a fairly new tower with the dual riser system. It worked fine for a few years until an exceptionally cold winter slammed Illinois with sub-zero temperatures for multiple consecutive days. We sprung a leak. I cannot tell you how disheartening it is to drive up to your water tower and see water pouring out from under the access door.

I immediately contacted a local painting contractor that also does elevated tank repairs. After attaching a trailer-mounted pressure tank to a fire hydrant and insulating the hoses and hydrant, we enclosed the underside of the tank trailer with rigid insulation board and ran an electric heater in that space. That kept us going while repairs were under way. The next day the contractor's crew stripped all the insulation off of the pipes as it was wet and useless. The leak turned out to be blown-out flange gaskets. Our engineers surmised that the cold temperatures caused the steel pipe to contract a bit; and since they were firmly attached to the structure, it widened the gap between the flanges causing gasket failure. Their solution was to re-attach the pipes to the structure a bit more loosely to allow more movement. The pipes had to have new insulation installed after the leak was repaired. That didn't happen right away. The insulation was not in-stock and took two weeks to arrive. Meantime we ran propane heaters in the pedestal base around the clock until the pipes were all insulated. High stress but… we got through it. End of story? Hardly. Three years later it happened again. The fill pipe gaskets blew out. Why the fill pipe both times and never the drain pipe? Movement. The drain pipe always has water moving through it. Even in the middle of the night, there's some water being used. The fill pipe only has movement when the pumps are running. From 10:00 pm till 6:00 am, I doubt they ran at all. There must have been enough ice built up in the fill pipe to push the flange gaskets out. If you are wondering what was involved in the repair just re-read the first section. Deja vu.



This time I wasn't buying the engineers' theory of metal contraction, and was determined to never let this happen again. Ten years running and it hasn't. Here's what we did.

#1: Shorten pump cycles. Longer pump cycles are the general rule for motor longevity and energy efficiency. Fewer starts and stops increase the lifespan of an electric motor. The system in question had controls set to start the high service pumps at 104 feet of head and shut down at 115 feet for 11 feet of range. For coldest part of winter, we shortened that range to 4 feet. This caused much more starting and stopping of the high service pump, but insured that there would be more frequent movement through the fill pipe. Since the pipes were well insulated, this might have been enough; but I wasn't taking any chances.

#2: Install heat trace. Before the rigid insulation was installed on the pipes, heat trace was wrapped around the pipe the entire length all the way to the bowl. And not just the home improvement type heat tape. This was ordered from an industrial supply house and is shaped more like rope than tape. Price at the time: $1100.00 and well worth it. To ensure that it was working, current readings were taken once a week. From the outset the device drew 12 amps of current. As long as the multimeter confirmed that it was consuming power, we knew that we had that extra level of protection. If the weather forecast called for exceptionally cold temperatures overnight, we'd check it more often.

While there's nothing we can do to control the weather, freezing problems in elevated storage can be mitigated using these two methods. Keep these in mind while we look forward to Spring.

Rural Water
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Finance Team History:
1,200+ loans for $3.7 billion

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- BABAA, AIS, Davis-Bacon do not apply to this Program

Finance Team History:
300+ loans for $500 million

About Us

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Dedicated Team of Professionals

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IRWA ILLINOIS RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

Water Main Breaks & Safe Excavation Practices - Protecting Infrastructure, Crews, and the Public

by Jake Johnson, IRWA Board Member

Water main breaks remain one of the most disruptive failures in municipal infrastructure. They can interrupt essential service, damage roadways and private property and place both workers and residents at serious risk. While aging infrastructure and extreme weather often contribute to these failures, a significant number of water main breaks are still caused by improper excavation practices. Preventing these incidents requires a strong commitment to safety, communication, and proper procedures in the field.

Many water mains in service today were installed decades ago using materials such as cast iron or early-generation ductile iron. Over time, these pipes weaken due to corrosion, soil movement, temperature fluctuations, and traffic loads. During colder months, freezing ground and shifting soils place additional stress on already vulnerable mains, making them more prone to sudden rupture. In warmer seasons, rapid soil drying and heavy construction activity increase the likelihood of accidental strikes.

Excavation near buried utilities presents one of the highest risk situations for infrastructure damage. Even small excavation equipment can exert enough force to fracture a pipe if proper locating and digging techniques are not followed. Striking a pressurized water main can result in flooding, erosion of road subgrade, sinkholes, and catastrophic pavement failure. More importantly, it places workers and the public in immediate danger from high-pressure water releases and unstable ground conditions.

Safe excavation begins well before any equipment enters the ground. Utility locating through the statewide 811 One-Call system is a critical first step in preventing damage. All underground utilities must be identified and clearly marked prior to excavation. These markings are not simply a formality; they are an essential safety control that protects lives, infrastructure and project budgets. Once utilities are marked, crews must verify locations with careful exposure techniques such as hand digging or vacuum excavation when working within tolerance zones.

Field awareness plays a major role in preventing water main damage. Operators must remain alert to soil changes, unknown utilities, abandoned lines and undocumented service connections. Assumptions about utility depth or alignment often lead to costly mistakes. Equipment should never be positioned or operated in a way that places cutting edges, buckets, or stabilizers directly over known utility corridors without proper clearance.

Communication is equally critical. When multiple contractors, utility crews and inspectors are present on a site, everyone must understand where water lines are located and how close excavation will approach them. A short safety briefing at the start of each shift can prevent misunderstandings that lead to accidents. If a line is exposed or damaged, work should stop immediately and the proper utility personnel should be notified without delay.

When a water main break does occur, quick, coordinated response minimizes its impact. Immediate isolation of the break, traffic control, public notification, and safe excavation of the damaged section are essential steps. Crews must remain aware that undermined pavement and saturated soil can collapse without warning. Personal protective equipment, trench safety measures, and proper dewatering are non-negotiable requirements during emergency repairs.

Preventing water main breaks is far more effective and economical than responding to them. Strong locating practices, careful excavation, trained operators and consistent communication save time, protect public infrastructure, and most importantly, prevent serious injuries. Every successful excavation without incident reinforces the value of preparation and professionalism in the field.

Protecting our underground infrastructure is not just a utility responsibility—it is a shared obligation among all who work near it. When safe excavation becomes routine practice, communities stay safer, service interruptions are minimized and the risks associated with water main failures are greatly reduced.

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