

Training Name: 2024 Virtual Operator Conference

Dates: February 6-8, 2024

Times: 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Central

Format: Four 1-hour workshops each day

Registration Link: <https://event.gotowebinar.com/event/a43ee1fa-ea33-42d2-bb8a-957739f93183>

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Sponsors:

Illinois State Water Survey - The Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) is a division of the Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois. The Water Survey's scientists conduct state-of-the-art research and collect, analyze, archive, and disseminate high-quality, objective data and technical information. The Water Survey's data, services, and expertise provide a sound technical basis for the people and policymakers of Illinois to make decisions.

Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) - The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a national network of non-profit partners working to provide technical assistance, training, resources, and support to rural communities across every state, the U.S. territories, and tribal lands. Through RCAP's regional partners, more than 350 technical assistance providers (TAPs) build long-term, trusted relationships with thousands of communities across the country.

Training Description:

This virtual training conference offers drinking water operators a chance to learn more about timely topics, improve fundamental skills, and get support for specific challenges while earning CEU credit to maintain their license. While there is no substitute for in-person training, this virtual event was created to specifically target operators of small and rural public water systems who may not have the means or ability to travel. Conference instructors are technical assistance providers from the RCAP network. The event is funded by a grant from the U.S. EPA for technical assistance and training of water operators. A full agenda including presentation descriptions and speaker bios is attached.

Methods for Attendance Verification:

The GoToWebinar Virtual Events platform will be used for registration and hosting the conference, offering robust analytics about the participant's attendance and engagement. Written comments and questions during each presentation will be facilitated by a moderator. Calculation of hours earned will be based on attendance start and end time, active participation in polls presented during each presentation, and completion of an end-of-day survey. Certificates will be issued within 2 weeks of the conference's conclusion and be in 4-hour increments, for up to 12 hours, or as otherwise required by the licensing body.

Registration Disclaimer Language:

I consent to sharing my information with WaterOperator.org and to receiving communications about this event and other programs. I understand that my participation and engagement in the event will be monitored for the purposes of determining eligibility and number of hours for a certificate to be provided upon request. I certify that only I, the registrant, will log in using my unique registration link and will participate in an environment conducive for learning.

Agenda:

Day 1: February 6, 2024

10:30 a.m. CST	Opening Welcome
10:45 a.m. CST	Understanding the Lead and Copper Rule and Its New Revisions <i>Quinn Andreas, Rural Community Assistance Corporation</i>
	EPA's new Lead and Copper Rule's intentions are to protect children and communities from the risks of lead exposure by better protecting children at schools and child care facilities, getting the lead out of our nation's drinking water, and empowering communities through information.
	However, with delays to the LCR's compliance deadline along with extensions on its effective date, there has been a lot of confusion. This talk is intended to give a brief overview of the rule and better understand the revisions and their timelines.
	<i>Quinn Andreas joined RCAC in 2019 as part of the Environmental Finance Center Region 10 Community and Environmental Services team. He provides technical, managerial and financial (TMF) assistance to small, disadvantaged community water and wastewater systems, primarily those serving systems owned and operated by Tribal entities. Quinn conducts Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulated sanitary surveys, provides technical assistance to systems to improve regulatory compliance, conducts capacity assessments, and assists seasonal water systems. He also provides private well assessments.</i>
	<i>Before joining RCAC, Quinn spent 10 years working as a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) in Idaho and Oregon. He was responsible for an on-site sewage regulatory program, which included conducting site evaluations, permit issuance, and code enforcement. Prior environmental health work included conducting surveys and monitoring public drinking water systems for compliance with Oregon Administrative Rules, and conducting inspections on licensed facilities such as restaurants, pools, motels, recreation parks, organizational camps, daycares, school kitchens, and Job Corps.</i>
11:45 a.m. CST	Break
11:55 a.m. CST	DBP Overview <i>Todd Brandenburg, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership</i>
	This session provides a brief overview of Disinfection Byproducts (DBPs) in drinking water. Participants will understand how DBPs are formed in drinking water along with rules, regulations, and guidelines related to monitoring DBPs. This session will conclude with mitigation techniques.
	<i>Todd Brandenburg, RCAP Operator, is located in southwest Ohio, and joined RCAP in</i>

	<p>2020. He has over 22 years of experience in community water and wastewater treatment, distribution, and collection operations and leadership. In his current role, Brandenburg provides technical water and wastewater assistance to rural communities throughout Ohio. Mr. Brandenburg also develops and presents technical training materials for Ohio operators. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management from Bluffton University and currently holds an Ohio EPA Water Supply III and Wastewater Treatment II certifications. Brandenburg is also NAASCO PACP, LACP, and MACP certified along with being an Ohio Department of Agriculture Aquatic Pesticide Applicator license holder.</p>
12:55 p.m. CST	Break
1:05 p.m. CST	<p>Consumer Consumer Confidence Reporting and Compliance Issues Mike Novac, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership</p> <p>Information in your report is often tailored to local water systems, so not all CCRs look alike. Some of the water quality information included in your report can help your consumers understand how their drinking water can affect their health. The presentation will provide an overview of provisions and compliance perspectives within the CCR with anticipated revisions. How can small systems comply with the rule and deliver information that can be understood by the customer?</p> <p>Prior to coming to RCAP, Mr. Novac worked as an environmental systems consultant, and spent 10 years as a public works director for a town in northern Indiana. He also spent four years in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Novac holds degrees in construction engineering (A.S.) and environmental/pollution control technology (A.A.S.), a B.S. degree in Public Administration, and MPI in urban/rural planning. He also has an Indiana Operator Certification in water treatment and distribution (Class PF and DSS) and Indiana Wastewater Certification Class II, and is a CDBG certified grant administrator. He also holds a professional certification in watershed management. He has operated a number of different wastewater treatment systems including stabilization lagoons, trickling filters, activated sludge, sequential batch reactors, extended aeration and other hybrid systems. In his free time, he enjoys fly-fishing, hiking, and camping.</p>
2:05 p.m. CST	Break
2:15 p.m. CST	<p>PFAS in Drinking Water Janelle Saucedo, Communities Unlimited</p> <p>Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that can lead to health problems such as cancer. They can enter surface water through runoff and affect fish and wildlife. PFAS are a concern to drinking water because they do not break down in the environment and highly resistant to chemical decomposition. It's important for small drinking water systems to understand, prepare, and budget if PFAS is found in drinking water sources and how to reduce the public's exposure.</p>

	<i>Speaker is Janelle Saucedo from Communities Unlimited, who resides in Dallas, TX. She graduated from the University of California, Riverside with a B.S. in Biology. Her background is in ecology research regarding the effects of pesticides, BPA, and PFAS on microorganisms in freshwater systems and applying an ecological theory of bottom-up effect where lower trophic levels will also affect higher trophic levels. She can use her knowledge to help small rural communities to be aware and prepare for these pollutants in their water systems at Communities Unlimited.</i>
3:15 p.m. CST	Closing Reminders

Day 2: February 7, 2024

10:30 a.m. CST	Opening Welcome
10:45 a.m. CST	<p>Fire Hydrants, the multi-functioning appurtenance <i>Julio Reyes, Rural Community Assistance Corporation</i></p> <p>This session will explore the anatomy of a hydrant, the different types of hydrants, and what a typical hydrant installation looks like. Participants will understand the common functions of a hydrant, how it can be used to maintain water quality, and how it can help an operator understand distribution system hydraulics. Relevant calculations and practical advice will also be included.</p> <p><i>Julio Reyes has been in the water treatment and water distribution industry for over 25 years. He has experience with operating and supervising small retail systems as well as with large whole water systems. Julio is familiar with groundwater treatment and surface water treatment plants, both conventional and direct.</i></p> <p><i>He has also served as committee chair for a drinking water educational group in Ventura County where he spearheaded training for operators to achieve their goals in higher certification before stepping down. Julio has also served on the SWRCB T-5 oral exam panel where he participated in determining if candidates were qualified to earn T-5 certification therefore being trusted to treat and deliver safe drinking water in large quantities to the community.</i></p> <p><i>His greatest professional passion is “sharing” operator knowledge to others so they too can treat and deliver safe drinking water to their communities.</i></p> <p><i>When he is not in the office, he enjoys SCUBA diving off the California coast at the Channel Islands and sometimes in the tropics. Julio has been happily married for 25 years and has a daughter who is attending art college.</i></p>
11:45 a.m. CST	Break
11:55 a.m. CST	GIS Mapping Applications with Hydrant Flushing, Valve Exercising, and Water

	<p>Leaks <i>Adam Bourque, RCAP Solutions</i></p> <hr/> <p>GIS mapping offers water operators enhanced efficiency in operational and maintenance activities such as hydrant flushing, valve exercising, and recording water breaks by expediting asset location and enabling real-time analysis. This training will highlight the capabilities of GIS Survey123 digital forms by automating the calculation of water loss estimates, time spent on these activities, and facilitate streamlined reporting processes. Furthermore, the training will provide an overview of fundamental GIS mapping principles, emphasizing location accuracy achieved through GPS/GNSS receivers, as well as alternative, viable GIS software solutions.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Adam joined RCAP Solutions in 2022 after spending over 3 years as a GIS Community Specialist for RCAP in Kentucky. Adam brings a unique skillset that specializes in creating customized GIS solutions and training focused on rural water and wastewater operations. While at RCAP in Kentucky, Adam’s GIS technical assistance focused on water, wastewater, recycling, and opioid and substance abuse mapping. Adam is also involved in grant writing, graphic design, and photography. Education: B.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Science with a minor in GIS from the University of Kentucky.</i></p>
12:55 p.m. CST	Break
1:05 p.m. CST	<p>Wellhead Protection Planning <i>Jesse Campbell, Midwest Assistance Program</i></p> <hr/> <p>The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) recognized that the best way to maintain high quality drinking water is to prevent contaminants from reaching drinking water sources. In 1986 it was amended to require states to develop Wellhead Protection Programs for public water supplies. This session will include best practices water operators can take to protect groundwater sources as well as recommended maintenance steps to ensure the well itself is not vulnerable to contamination.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Jesse Campbell is the Coordinator of the Private Well Program at Midwest Assistance Program (MAP). He possesses a Master’s Degree in generalized social work methodology from the University of Missouri Kansas City. Jesse has worked with well owners for 7 years and been a well owner for more than 17 years. Jesse has evaluated over 450 private wells using the assessment tool throughout the Midwest. Jesse plans and delivers seminars, trainings, and workshops for well owners and professionals providing them with the necessary tools and resources to successfully protect public health and groundwater in MAP’s region. He is a licensed DS1 Water Operator in the State of Missouri.</i></p>
2:05 p.m. CST	Break
2:15 p.m. CST	<p>Emergency Response Planning - Lessons Learned <i>Joan Douglas, Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project</i></p>

	<p>After every event there are lessons learned. This session will share experiences from Hurricane Michael (2018) that will help water systems be better prepared for responding to a natural disaster.</p> <p><i>Joan Douglas, State Lead, is located in Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project's Florida office, working with rural communities since June 1998.</i></p> <p><i>Douglas' duties include project and program development; grant writing; and onsite training and technical assistance for the planning, financing, and development of existing and new water and wastewater systems.</i></p> <p><i>Her experience includes providing onsite assistance on financial, managerial and technical problems in water and wastewater system operation, small group management and security training for boards and staffs of public utilities, and onsite assistance to water/wastewater system staff in areas of rate setting, policy development, accounting, bookkeeping, and environmental compliance.</i></p> <p><i>As an elected council member/current Mayor for the town of Worthington Springs for 15 years, she also has direct experience in working with small, rural leadership boards. Her prior experience includes ten years as an environmental science laboratory manager at Santa Fe Community College.</i></p>
3:15 p.m. CST	Closing Reminders

Day 3: February 8, 2024

10:30 a.m. CST	Opening Welcome
10:45 a.m. CST	<p>Basic Math for Drinking Water Operators <i>Rebekah Novak, RCAP Solutions</i></p> <p>This "Basic Math" session is a refresher course for those looking to brush up on their basic math skills, whether for daily operation calculations or in preparation for an operator's exam. We will start at the beginning, quickly covering the basics of fractions, Percentages, and geometry, then will spend a bit more time on conversion factors and rearranging equations.</p> <p><i>Rebekah graduated from the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth with a BA in Civil Engineering. Rebekah has worked in the Engineering Departments for both the City of New Bedford as well and the City of Greenfield Department of Public Works. She has also worked for a private firm, designing septic systems. She obtained her Grade 5C Wastewater Operator's License shortly after graduating college and has worked at large and small treatment facilities.</i></p>

11:45 a.m. CST	Break
11:55 a.m. CST	<p>Board Relationships <i>Daniel Wilson, Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project</i></p> <p>Board relationships are crucial for success. Effective communication, trust, collaboration, shared vision, governance, clear roles, and positive culture are key. By promoting effective relationships, organizations can drive innovation and achieve their goals. This session will expand upon basic board duties and emphasize the key attributes of exceptional board members.</p> <p><i>Wilson is a technical assistant who provides support to rural communities in Delaware for drinking water and solid waste diversion. He is certified as a Drinking Water Sampler/Tester and conducts water sampling and well assessments. His responsibilities include project and program development, training and technical support, and grant writing for small towns and civic associations. Wilson has also assisted in establishing and maintaining various civic associations and movements. He is an active Board Member of Housing Alliance Delaware, Sussex Housing Group, and Delaware's 32nd District Council. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and four children, playing PC games, such as "Cities: Skylines II", and actively supporting the creation and maintenance of clean and modern parks both locally and beyond.</i></p>
12:55 p.m. CST	Break
1:05 p.m. CST	<p>Boost Math Confidence with Practical Applications <i>Lucas Guinn, Communities Unlimited</i></p> <p>This session uses basic math principles to explore the calculations and formulas used by water operators on a daily basis. Practical applications and examples will help participants feel more confident in their use of math on the job. Topics will include conversions, velocity, as well as calculating pressure in psi or volume in gallons.</p> <p><i>Lucas Guinn is a technical assistance provider for Communities Unlimited in the state of Oklahoma. Mr. Guinn has been a certified water and wastewater works operator, as well as a water works lab and wastewater works lab operator in Oklahoma since 2002.</i></p>
2:05 p.m. CST	Break
2:15 p.m. CST	<p>Examples of smaller scale partnerships <i>Chris McKee, Midwest Assistance Program</i></p> <p>Making connections and creating smaller scale relationships for rural communities is important in many aspects including regular operations and maintenance, financial management, reducing risk, and creating resilience. This presentation will discuss the importance of having and maintaining these relationships.</p>

	<p><i>Ms. McKee has been with the Midwest Assistance Program since 2019. Prior to that she was a city clerk/finance officer of a rural community for 9 years. She still resides in this rural community. Ms. McKee conducts training in the state of Iowa for MAP and works with a number of rural communities throughout Iowa. Ms. McKee is a graduate of Upper Iowa University, graduating with an AA in 1998. Ms. McKee is the proud mother of three wonderful now grown children.</i></p>
3:15 p.m. CST	Closing Reminders