

Pacific Northwest Section of the American Water Works Association (PNWS-AWWA)
Utility Management Committee Winter 2025 Training - “**Recruit, Train, Retain**”
Speaker Summaries

Course Objectives: In the 2024 AWWA State of the Water Industry Report, Workforce Issues were in the top 10 issues facing the water sector. We must address workforce challenges across all water utility functions in order to fulfill our missions of providing safe, reliable and affordable water to our communities. This course will address how water utilities can partner with academia and learn from each other, to better **Recruit, Train and Retain** water staff to maintain more sustainable water utilities.

9:15-10:15 Academics Panel Will Discuss What Students Are Learning About STEM Careers, Especially Water

Sarah Woodward, Middle School Teach, Holy Trinity Catholic School, Beaverton

Sarah has inspired middle school students for the past decade. Originally from England and a resident of the Pacific Northwest for 16 years, Sarah holds a master’s degree in education with a focus on STEM curriculum and instruction, reflecting her deep commitment to enhancing educational experiences in the sciences. With a rich background as the STEM/Nature Program Director for a Girl Scout summer camp for nine years, Sarah continues to support young leaders by volunteering with Girl Scouts each summer. Currently pursuing her doctorate at the University of Portland, her dissertation explores innovative solutions to teacher attrition by maximising community partnerships.

Randy Scott, Engineering and Robotics Teach, Roosevelt Highschool, North Portland

Having earned two civil engineering degrees from OSU, he is passionate about inspiring students to explore the world of engineering. His hands-on, project-based approach encourages creativity and problem-solving, preparing the next generation of innovators.

Greg Flores, Associate Director of The University Career Center for Advising & Career Services.

Greg teaches Career workshops for the University Career Center, namely Networking 101.

Greg is the president of Oregon Career Development Association (OCDA), where he is involved in OCDA communications and membership development.

Karly Kelsey, Mechanical Engineering Student, University of Washington

Karly graduated from Liberty High School in Renton, WA and is in her second year studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Washington. She has completed internships at both McKinstry and Schnabel Engineering, gaining experience in vertical construction management, dam engineering and sustainability. She is actively engaged with the Society of Women Engineers and in promoting engineering as a profession.

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10:15-10:45 Talking to Kids About Water and How to Build Interest in the Water Industry for Middle and High School Students

Suzanne Hebert, Educator, Vancouver Water Resources Education Center

Suzanne Hebert serves as an Educator at the City of Vancouver’s Water Resources Education Center where she manages the Water Center’s K-12 and teacher education programs. Suzanne holds a B.S. in Aquatic Biology from the University of California, Santa Barbara and has over 20 years of experience teaching in nonformal education settings including aquariums and science centers across the country. Suzanne enjoys developing and teaching programs that introduce students and teachers to the wonders of water and nature through outdoor discovery and scientific inquiry. She is also passionate about mentoring youth with an interest in education and conservation and has supported dozens of interns and AmeriCorps members on their journey to become teachers and scientists. When she’s not at the Water Center, you can find Suzanne in and on the water swimming, scuba diving, paddleboarding and kayaking.

11:00-11:45 Panel of Oregon Utilities Will Discuss the Biggest Challenges and Roadblocks for Recruiting Water Staff

Bhargavi Ambadkar, PE, TPSD Engineering Manager, City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

As the Treatment and Pumping Systems Division Engineering Manager at Portland BES, Bhargavi is responsible for managing all aspects of technical improvements for treatment and pumping facilities, including, hiring, contracting, capital planning and technical standards. She has 20 years of experience and has worked for the City of Portland since 2018. Bhargavi previously worked as a consulting engineer with Carollo Engineers and West Yost Associates. She has both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in civil engineering and is an active member of PNCWA.

Kylie Bayer, Human Resources Director, Tualatin Valley Water District

As the Human Resources Director at the Tualatin Valley Water District, Kylie is responsible for overseeing people management strategy through the following functions: talent acquisition and staffing strategy, compliance, employee relations, risk management, health and safety, benefits/total rewards, and performance management. She has worked in the public sector her entire career, starting with the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District (Beaverton OR), working in communications and then HR. Kylie transitioned to the City of McMinnville in 2018 and built their HR program as the City’s first HR Manager. She began her current role with the Tualatin Valley Water District in 2022. Kylie has a master’s degree in public administration and a bachelor’s degree in education. She also has the Senior Certified Professional certification from the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM-SCP). Kylie currently serves as the chair of the PNWS-AWWA Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

Kimberly Kelsey, PE, PMP, Principal Consultant, Parametrix

As a Principal Consultant, Kimberly is responsible for client facing project execution, contract management, and business development, as well as recruiting, supervising, and mentoring staff. She currently leads the Parametrix Program Advisory Services Group and has 29 years of experience working as an engineer, project and program manager, operations leader and client account manager. She has worked as a consultant since 2001

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previously with Brown and Caldwell CH2M/Jacobs, and TYLin. She also has private industry experience with General Motors, Thermo King (transport refrigeration) and Applied Precision (semiconductor testing). Kimberly has both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in mechanical engineering and is an active member of PNCWA (Water for People Committee) and PNWS-AWWA (DEI and Utility Management Committees).

11:45-12:15 AWWA Rates and Charges Workforce Goals will Highlight the Need for Water Finance Staff

Andy Baker, Economist, Cascade Water Alliance

Andy has broad experience in the utility industry, working in utility finance and rates, design engineering, and utility consent decree negotiations, as both a consultant and now as utility staff. He has worked for water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities across the United States, ranging from rural utility districts to major regional utilities, and has engaged with the breadth of stakeholders, from dedicated operating boards, city councils, and citizens advisory groups. Andy is a member of AWWA’s national Rates and Charges Committee, a contributor to the *M1 Principles of Water Rates, Fees and Charges*, and a member of the PNWS-AWWA Utility Management Committee.

1:30-2:00 Portland Water Bureau Training and Development Will Showcase the Programs Used at PWB to Engage Staff

Phoebe Daurio, Training and Development Analyst, Portland Water Bureau

Phoebe focuses on designing employee programs and experiences to help staff thrive. Phoebe has a background in adult education and program management, and she uses her listening, facilitation, and problem-solving skills to support employee engagement across the Portland Water Bureau. Phoebe has designed and implemented bureau-wide programs that support employee’s investment in the impact of their work, including professional development and cross-group learning opportunities. She manages a new employee orientation, a monthly share and learn, and a multi-day, immersive program that gives employees a hands-on, in-depth look into each component of the source to tap process. She also coordinates performance management across the bureau, from creating clear policies and guidelines to training managers and employees how to set objectives and give/receive feedback.

2:00-2:30 Operator Training and Development – How to Build Standards and Metrics to Recruit, Develop and Retain Operators

John Roth, Water Quality & Production Manager, Clark Public Utilities

John has worked for 23 years in Public Water Systems Operation. Current duties include water production, treatment, pumping, storage and water quality for the un-incorporated areas in Clark County. His team is responsible for Department of Health Drinking Water programs for Clark Public Utilities water systems including the main system and the 22 satellite systems owned, managed, or operated. John is a Licensed Professional Operator, Water Distribution Manager 4, Water Treatment Plant Operator 3 and Cross Connection Control Specialist and currently

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sits on Washinton Water Utility Council as Vice-Chair and is also a member of the Washington State Department of Health Waterworks Operators Certification Advisory Board.

Andrew Holmes, Water Operations Manager, Clark Public Utilities

Andrew has 14 years of utility experience at Clark Public Utilities. His responsibility is over the personnel that maintain the water distribution system. Service installations, leak repairs, meters, hydrants and valves are all part of daily life. Over the past 6 years Andrew has volunteered and had several roles with the Lower Columbia Subsection of the Pacific Northwest Section of AWWA. Andrew is a Licensed Water Distribution Manager 4, Water Treatment Plant Operator 2 and Cross Connection Control Specialist. He began his career at Clark Public Utilities in 2010 as a Utility Helper in the warehouse and then moving to the Water Department in 2012 as a Water Trainee. In a few short years Andrew advanced from a Trainee to a Water Systems Operator and eventually the Water Working Foreman. For the last 18 months Andrew has been the Water Operations Manager.

[2:45-3:15 Creating a Workforce Training Program Including Apprenticeships, Scholarships and Internships](#)

Dr. Wade E. Hathhorn, General Manager, Sunrise Water Authority

Dr. Hathhorn was appointed General Manager of Sunrise Water Authority in October of 2010. Dr. Hathhorn received a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Nevada with high distinction, a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Wyoming and a PH. D. in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas. He has a varied professional background, having spent seven years as a university professor prior to embarking on a thirteen-year career as a consultant. Prior to joining Sunrise Water Authority, Dr. Hathhorn served as a Vice President at MWH Americas, Inc.

[3:15-3:45 AWWA Mentor Program Focuses on Building the Next Generation and Future Water Workforce](#)

Chris Young, PE, Parametrix

Chris is a civil engineer with over 15 years of consulting engineering experience in the water infrastructure industry. His work has primarily focused on water system master plans, seismic resilience planning, risk and resilience assessments, and emergency response planning. Chris also has extensive experience in the design, construction, and integrated operation of AWWA D110 Type I prestressed concrete reservoirs. At Parametrix, Chris leads water system master planning, risk and resilience assessments, and the development of emergency response strategies with a focus on seismic resilience. He provides guidance in assessing and enhancing the reliability of water infrastructure, ensuring preparedness for emergencies. As a key resource for Parametrix, Chris supports the team in delivering emergency response solutions for clients' water systems, guiding strategic planning and response initiatives across projects.