

## Are You Prepared For Winter?

Aaron Perez, Water Systems Specialist

Last winter was an unusually easy one, but let's not forget the woes of 2014. It's time to start thinking of what your water system needs to do to get ready for the cold to come.

Are your non-draining fire hydrants dewatered? Having worked in the field for a number of years, I have come across many frozen solid hydrants. This can pose a risk to public safety and lead to costly repairs. It's important to keep a running list of all the non-draining hydrants in your system and to have a good working relationship with your local fire department. This will keep you informed and prepared for the times when the hydrant is used during the winter months. I have seen several types of small pumps used for dewatering hydrants: hand bailing pumps, hand drill pumps, and small electric pumps that either can be run off a vehicle battery or a 110v inverter. If you're a very small system, the hand operated pump can be a great low tech cost effective way to go. If you have several hydrants to dewater, I like the small electric type for its convenience and reliability. The pumps that attach to a battery operated

## Why Are Drinking Water Operators Important

Matt Guerino, Training Specialist

Over the last few years, the Water System industry has seen some exciting and trying times. In Vermont we have met the challenges head on, be it Tropical Storm Irene or the very cold winter of 2015. As I have worked alongside you, I have noted that Water Operators work very hard to provide the very best water quality to their customers with the stresses and strains of small budgets.

Recently I completed my second year teaching the preparatory course for beginning water operators. A reoccurring question has been brought up during the class. Why am I important? The response is simple, and yet complex. My initial response is because you provide potable drinking water to the public. However, this doesn't actually answer the question fully.

Without Public Drinking Water Operators we wouldn't have

proper pressures in our house to run our sprinklers that water our gardens, and fire hydrants wouldn't have proper pressures to help put out fires. We wouldn't have potable drinking water to help protect against illness or supply our schools, hospitals and elderly living facilities. We need to keep in mind the last cholera outbreak occurred a

little over 100 years ago. You are more than just a sampler. You protect the public from health risks. You are just as important as the police officer and the fireman.

Water operators, no matter if you are a full time employee of a town, a volunteer in your community and or operate your water system as a 'small' part of

your normal day-to day job, are important. No matter how difficult your job may be, without water operators normal day-to-day life would be very different. To that, I want to say thank you for what you do, Keep it up! ●



Operators reviewing daily logs

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Since 1982, Vermont Rural Water Association has supported water and wastewater systems across the state. We provide many services, including training, source water protection planning, and onsite assistance.

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News Leaks is the official publication of VRWA. It is published quarterly for distribution to operators, owners, managers and board members of water and wastewater systems in Vermont, as well as to association members, water and wastewater service providers, regulators, and other friends. Opinions expressed in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of VRWA.

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# Letters

Lunenburg Fire District #2  
P.O. Box 148  
Gilman, VT 05904  
802-892-7780  
Sept. 11, 2016

Mr. Shaun Fielder  
Executive Director  
Vermont Rural Water Association  
20 Susie Wilson Road, Suite B  
Essex Junction, VT 05452-2827

Shawn,

On behalf of the Lunenburg Fire District #2, I wish to thank your organization for all the assistance provided to us during recent times, especially to thank Wayne Graham for his assistance and guidance in the lagoon valves repacking and aeration packs installation upgrade projects this summer. His expertise has been invaluable for our small community system to keep it operating properly. We can't thank Wayne enough. During my involvement with the District, Wayne has always been willing to help when our operators were in need.

I commend your organization and all Specialists involved in this industry. Many small systems are in need of such assistance and your organization offers invaluable assistance, be it in training, project assistance and guidance, or just answering questions. It's a valuable avenue for our water and wastewater systems to go to.

Again, thank you Wayne for all your help. Be assured it is very well appreciated.

Shaun, thanks again. VRWA certainly deserves recognition in its work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Donald Hallee'.

Donald Hallee  
Chairman, Prudential Committee  
Lunenburg Fire District #2

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A brass valve, labeled 'FORD'.

A brass valve, labeled 'ZURN WILKINS'.

# News on Tap

## Nominations for Tony Torchia Award and Board of Directors

In the spring, one of our board positions is up for election. This will be voted on by membership following the receipt of nominations. Our all-volunteer board meets quarterly to direct and oversee the association.

Directors are representatives of VRWA-member water/wastewater systems and they are elected to the board for three-year terms by the membership. Self nominations are allowed.

The Tony Torchia VRWA Special Recognition Award honors a person affiliated with the water/wastewater industry for extraordinary effort or accomplishment during the previous year or over the course of a career. All the members are invited to submit nominations.

Nominations for a board seat or the Tony Torchia Award must be received by January 31, 2017. For a nomination form, please visit [www.vtruralwater.org](http://www.vtruralwater.org).

## VRWA 2017 Annual Conference and Trade Show

Mark your calendar's and be sure to save the date for our 2017 conference and trade show event. We are looking forward to returning to the Lake Morey Resort on May 3 & 4, 2017. More information on registration for our associate contacts as well as individuals will be released soon.



## Liz Royer Presents at International Source Water Protection Workshop in Quebec City

Our own Liz Royer presented at the International Source Water Protection Workshop as held in Quebec City, Quebec on November 1 – 3, 2016. Liz's presentation titled, "Source Water Protection and Land Use Planning: Partnering for Successful Implementation – USA," showcased proven and practical strategies she has implemented with various Vermont communities to insure protection of their public water supply sources. Congrats to Liz on presenting at this international conference.

## 2017 Rally

VRWA is gearing up for our annual visit to Capitol Hill taking place February 6 – 8, 2017. The key objective for this annual visit is to showcase our accomplishments for 2016 and seek out legislative support for rural water program funding. This has direct positive impact for the water sector and all of you at the grassroots level. Toward the goal of illustrating how important VRWA is to you, we request on an ongoing basis letters of support. Please consider drafting a letter and note why and how VRWA has made a difference for you in 2016. Please consider submitting such an item direct to attn: Shaun Fielder (Executive Director) prior to December 31.

## Vermont's Best Tasting Water Goes To Washington

VRWA is proud to support the entry of Champlain Water District's water into the Great American Taste contest to be held at the National Rural Water Association Rally February 6 – 8, 2017. CWD was top prize winner at the VT Drinking Water Week Taste Contest as held at the VRWA conference this past spring. Best of luck to CWD at the contest!

## Wastewater Treatment Facility Operator Certification transfer to the Office of Professional Regulation

In the spring of 2016, the Legislature passed Act 156 to transfer the licensing of Wastewater (Pollution Abatement) Facility Operators from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to the Secretary of State's Office of Professional Regulation (OPR). OPR manages 46 professional licenses for approximately 58,000 licensees, and has an efficient, on-line license application and renewal process. After the transfer, DEC will continue to review and approve wastewater courses for the requisite continuation credits for your certification. DEC will continue to work with OPR and anticipates a smooth transition.

**The implementation date is January 1, 2017.** After that date OPR will handle the administration of all wastewater operator licenses, including exams.

If your license is up for renewal and you have obtained the required number of training hours, consider submitting an application to DEC by December 19, 2016 so that it can be processed before the transfer occurs.

Additional information is provided on the Watershed Management Division's web page.



# Industry Updates

by Shaun Fielder, Executive Director

We have seen many changes this year on regulatory issues and most notably on the wastewater operations side of things. The Lake Champlain TMDLs were issued this summer, new combined sewer overflow regulation updates took effect September 15 and we will see the administration of the wastewater operator certification program shift from Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to the Vermont Secretary of State Office of Professional Regulation. A big thank you to Carole Fowler (VT DEC) who handled many aspects of the administration program for years. This shift will take place in the first part of 2017. Tied to this change there are some items to be decided on certification renewal cycles, associated certification fees, and details of the renewal process. Please have confidence the office of professional regulation will have sound practices and procedures in place to make for a smooth transition. It is our understanding the wastewater operator certification advisory committee will be organized and in final form still be providing review and oversight of wastewater certification processes.

For all these regulatory issues you should be well aware there is a significant cost attached to many of the given items. It would appear there could be a significant gap in what is needed for capital vs. expense needs for all the required improvements to come.

The discussions on funding opportunities for the noted projects have been ongoing and we are at the phase where implementation and action to make improvements is required.

Act 64 (June 2015) established the Clean Water Fund to provide financial support and also directed the Office of the State Treasurer to prepare a report that includes, "a recommendation for financing water quality improvement programs in the State." Progress continues on the report and it is going to be released at the start of the 2017 legislative session. More information on the long-term water quality funding can be found at this link: <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/cwf/future>

Switching gears I want to add one important topic for your consideration in this issue. If you are not actively and regularly promoting the successes and importance of your work in the water sector, you are behind the curve. Taking a back seat stance of not advocating means the only time there is news about your system is when there is a problem. Even during critical times, speaking up is important. As an example, I submitted this letter to editor item this summer to the Barre Montpelier Times Argus. For some quick background, the Montpelier Wastewater Treatment Facility was being attacked and effectively implicated as

conducting negligent operations. An accusation that was far from the facts at hand. Key to any update and notification strategy is to remind people of the big picture and overall successful operations.

Here is the letter to the editor item: (published August 24, 2016)

## ***City of Montpelier (and other) Wastewater Treatment Facilities Do and Will Continue to Protect the Environment***

*Heavy rain events from earlier this week impacted many portions of Vermont. Unfortunately these high intensity storms are occurring much more frequently and are a major contributor to limited overload instances at given wastewater treatment facilities and combined sewer overflow systems (CSO). There is no denying that an overflow is a problem situation but it is important to remember community wastewater treatment facilities across the state, on running average, are meeting and or doing better than required discharge permit standards on a daily basis.*

(Continued on page 5)

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*The City of Montpelier had such an overflow this past week and were quickly attacked and framed as an entity that is negligent. These allegations are definitely inaccurate for the following reasons, the city took immediate and very professional actions to first and foremost resolve and mitigate the issue, and just as important complete the necessary self reporting to inform the public and state regulators of the situation.*

*Everyone should be aware for the day of an estimated 10,000 gallon CSO overflow the Montpelier Wastewater Treatment Facility properly treated 3.16 MILLION gallons. Yes you read that correctly, 3.16 million. Let's run the math on the success rate for overall volume treated by the city on this particular day. A lost volume to total treated volume success rate of 99.997 percent. I hope everyone would agree this is an A+++ and therefore an operations process that is protecting the environment. One final point for consideration, the flow conditions for the Dog and Winooski River were near flood stage this past week and very turbid. The quality of discharge water from the wastewater treatment facility was exceedingly better than the quality of these rivers.*

*Thank you to all the folks involved with management and operation of both the Montpelier wastewater treatment facility and combined sewer overflow system. Your efforts 365/24/7 are key factors for environmental protection, public health protection, and economic basis for central Vermont.*

*Sincerely,  
Shaun Fielder*

As we close 2016 the changes continue for all of us. A big thank you to all of you, what you do matters. Please try to keep informed, active, and working diligently. All of us at VRWA are proud to work with you on an ongoing basis and we all are working together toward the mission of promoting public health and environmental protection. The best to you and your families in this holiday season. ●



Contact VRWA Executive Director  
Shaun Fielder at 802-660-4988 x315 or  
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# Definition of Easements

Submitted by Brent Desranleau, Water Systems Specialist

## What is an easement?

An easement is the right provided to a person or entity to use someone else's property. The property owner usually transfers this right while retaining ownership through execution of an easement document.

## What is a permanent easement?

A permanent easement is a right granted by an underlying property owner that entitles its holder to a specific use of the property in perpetuity.

## What is a temporary easement?

A temporary easement is a right granted for a specific period of time and once it expires, the rights granted return to the property owner. Temporary easements may be used for stockpiling dirt, the maneuvering of equipment, or storage of materials.

## Does an easement devalue my property?

Typically, easements have minimal impact on property value.

## Will my property be restored to its previous condition?

Your property will be restored to its previous condition (or as close as possible) excluding mature trees.

## DEFINITIONS OF EASEMENTS

Permanent Easements are normally 20 feet wide and are required for ongoing inspection and maintenance. The underlying property owner's rights to use a permanent easement are somewhat restricted, although non-structural improvements such as walkways, driveways, and fencing are generally allowable, as are some types of shallow rooted landscaping. The Authority may access a permanent easement for maintenance purposes.

Temporary Easements vary in size, however most are 40 to 60 feet wide and are frequently required for construction of pipelines or other facilities that may lie in permanent easements.

## TYPES OF EASEMENTS


Water Easements contain pipelines that carry potable water and are generally constructed within the right-of-way of the roads. Work in the right-of-way does not require an easement from the adjacent property owner, and the contractor does not have the right to enter private property.

It may be necessary to obtain a permanent easement as well as a temporary construction easement in unusual cases. It may not be possible to construct required water lines within an existing right-of-way. In some instances, installation of a water line within a right-of-way may require a temporary easement

on private property for construction equipment access, or other purpose.

Water lines are generally only four to five feet deep and do not have to follow existing contours. Permanent and temporary water line easements are otherwise similar to sewer easements.

Sanitary Sewer Easements are needed for the installation of sewer pipelines and their ongoing maintenance. Sewer construction usually involves both permanent and temporary construction easements.

Force Main Easements are used for installation of a pipe that carries sewage from a pumping station to its destination which may be a treatment plant or a higher point in the sewerage system. Force main construction usually involves both permanent and temporary construction easements. 



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# Funding Opportunities from USDA Rural Development and Vermont DEC

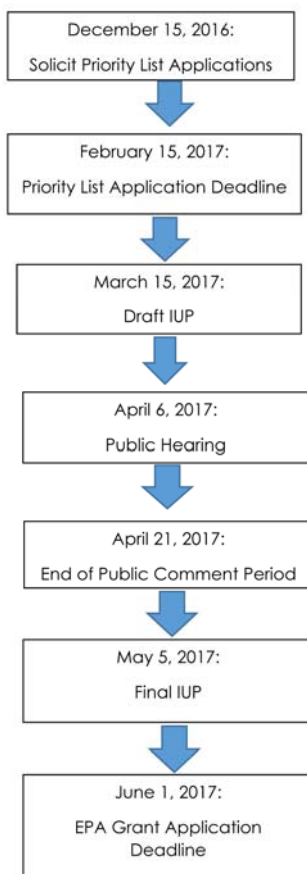
## USDA-RD FY2017 Applications

USDA-RD's Water and Environmental Program is now accepting applications for federal fiscal year 2017 to acquire, construct, or improve water, wastewater, and stormwater systems. Interest rates went down another 0.4% this past October 1<sup>st</sup> and rates are at historical lows. There may be no better time to secure public financing for necessary aging infrastructure projects. Applications are due by January 30, 2017 for our less competitive state allocation pool and April 14, 2017 for national pool consideration. Applicants are encouraged to use the new electronic application intake system, RD Apply.

<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program/vt>

## VT SRF Funding Timeline

### Proposed SFY 2017/FFY 2018 IUP Development Schedule



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# Happy Holidays

*"Are you prepared for Winter?"  
continued from cover*

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drill are inexpensive but tend to wear out fast and keeping the drill charged can be an inconvenience.

Are your generators all in good working order? Make sure you have exercised them regularly and that needed gas stabilizer has been added. Check oil levels and all other fluids. Is your snow removal equipment ready to do its job? Are all your facilities buttoned up? I know of a few systems that send out reminders to mobile home owners to plug in their heat tape and ensure that the skirting is in place. It is also a good idea to check on any vacant properties to see if they are being heated or have been winterized. This is by no means complete winter preparedness list, but just a few reminders to get you started thinking about what needs to be done before Mother Nature closes in again. ■



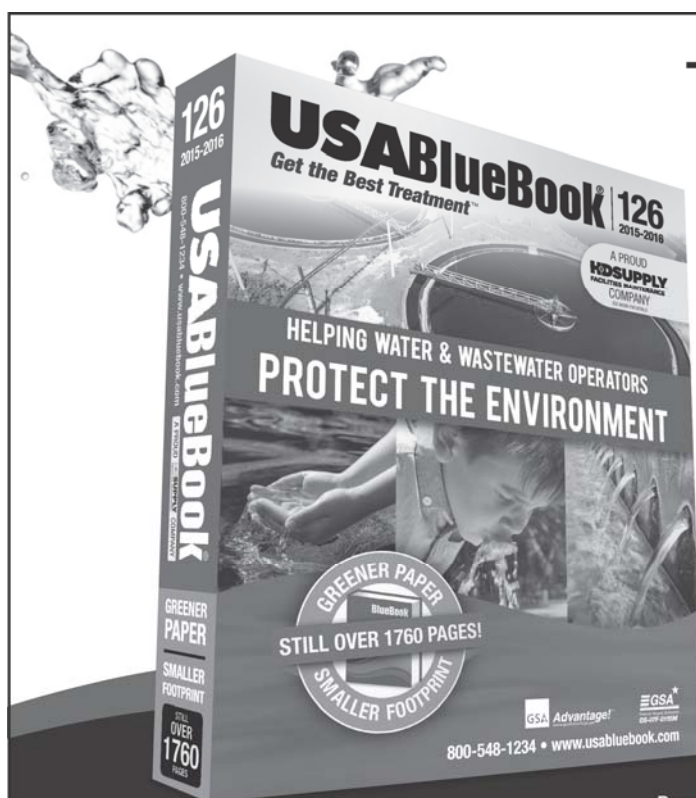
## VRWA Offers Online Training

VRWA is partnering with SunCoast Learning Systems to provide online based training courses. The courses offered through this program are approved for water and wastewater training contact hours by the VT DEC Drinking Water & Groundwater Protection Program and the Wastewater Management Program. See course titles, hours, and cost information at this link:

<https://www.suncoastlearning.com/courses/vt/vt.html>

VRWA is excited to offer this type of training to supplement our classroom based training.

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