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Note: this article contains inaccurate information.
For the latest updates, visit https://vtruralwater.org/covid-19-shutoff-moratorium/
A Leak in the Woods
Complicated repair is no problem for Vermont specialists

A transmission line that was dug by hand over 100 years ago supplies the drinking water for Jeffersonville, Vermont. The source springs are located on a mountain near Smugglers Notch. Water flows by gravity down the transmission line through thick mountain forest. Because it was dug by hand, the water line is very shallow, even above ground in some places.

In July, Trevor Welch, operator for the Village of Jeffersonville (VRWA System Member) and Laramie Water Resources (VRWA Associate Member) performed a delicate repair on this antique infrastructure.

The spring-fed transmission line has no pump, making a live repair possible. The transmission line is shallow enough that the valve could be dug with shovels, which was fortunate: the remote location and dense forest would have made it very difficult to bring in large equipment.

Vermont Rural Water’s Paul Sestito was helping Trevor to locate and mark the transmission line when they discovered two air release valves. One of the valves, located in an extremely wet and overgrown area, had broken at the connection to the line.

Paul dug a water diversion ditch in order to better view the leaking valve.

Laramie Water Resources was able to repair the leak by removing the broken valve and installing a new corporation valve.

The group accomplished a quick repair in a difficult and remote location. Vermont water specialists are truly incredible!
Note on Trainings

All classes will be online using Zoom through November and likely longer. Find information about how to use Zoom on our website.

DWGPD and OPR are accepting online trainings for TCHs right now. Renewing water and wastewater operators may request an extension to complete continuing education requirements. At this time, no operator certification exams have been scheduled for 2020.

To request accommodations, call (802) 660-4988 or email info@vtruralwater.org

Cancellations/Refunds

Cancellations received at least 24 hours in advance can receive a refund or transfer to another class. No-shows will be charged the full course fee.

Registration and Payments

Register online at VTruralwater.org/training to pay by credit card or check. You can also register by mailing in the form below with a check. Members receive a 50% discount on registration fees for all employees.

Register Online: VTruralwater.org/training

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### Registration Form

**Course and Date:**

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**Attendee Name(s):**

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**System/Organization:**

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**Billing Address:**

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**Email:**

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**Phone:**

(number where you can be reached the morning of class)

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**Payment Enclosed:**

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**Mail this form and payment to:**

VRWA
20 Susie Wilson Rd, Suite B
Essex Junction, VT 05452

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**Questions?**

info@vtruralwater.org

(802) 660-4988
This column details clever solutions invented by Vermont’s water and wastewater professionals. These money-saving, stress-reducing hacks make life at your second home—the treatment plant—a little bit easier.

Flying High

Dana Allen of FluidState Consulting is an FAA Certified Part 107 pilot who uses his skills to help public works staff with smoke testing and inspections using Unmanned Aerial Systems, or drones. When smoke testing in a community with tall buildings, drones are very good tools for inspecting those flat roof drains without having to gain access to roofs. This saves time and effort. A drone can fly directly to a potential source of smoke to determine if it’s a roof drain or just a sewer vent pipe, which is hard to do from the ground. Aerial inspection can also help determine where collection system pipes go by observing where smoke issues from vent pipes (no more running through backyards!) Drones can also fly along wastewater receiving streams to search for unknown wastewater or stormwater outfall structures. I have worked with Dana on several smoke testing projects and have had significant results.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle...

Randy Shimp, chief operator of the Cavendish WWTF (VRWA System Member), solved a pretty big problem without even leaving the plant. The aeration system in the primary pond was no longer operable, so Randy dug an old surface splasher out of the bushes and, after a bit of maintenance, had it on the lagoon and working (below). A portable standby pump station generator provided the electrical capacity to operate it. Dissolved oxygen levels rose and he kept the plant in compliance.

...Repurpose, Retrofit

Sometimes VRWA staff even dabble in Yankee ingenuity. The North Troy WWTP (VRWA System Member) was in desperate need of a return activated sludge pump. They are in the middle of an engineering review and not in a position to purchase a new pump. So VRWA wastewater specialist Elizabeth Walker (at right) and I repurposed a Penn Valley pump from another facility. With some piping modifications and assistance from plant staff, it was operating flawlessly in no time!😊

Dana Allen (right) uses a drone during smoke testing in Newport, Vermont, in July. Aerial footage courtesy of Dana Allen.
Ten Things I’ve Learned Teaching Webinars

by Matt Guerino
Training Coordinator

I’ve been teaching classes on Zoom since the Stay Home, Stay Safe order in mid-March. We’ve had over 40 online trainings, and it’s been a learning process for everyone.

10. Adults are camera-shy; children are not. Most people in my classes are shy to be on camera, and I am too. But my son especially thinks it’s cool to see everyone in class. Some of you got to say hi to him at a bunch of my classes.

9. I don’t like speaking nonstop for hours at a time. I know a lot of you are laughing at this as I have a tendency to talk a lot. But I miss your stories and hearing from you during class breaks.

8. Dining room tables are better for eating than for teaching. Those of you who took classes in March and April got to see me working from my dining room. It was a mess of books, reference materials, and cords going everywhere.

7. I touch my face way more than I thought. Did I mention I don’t really like being on camera? I keep my camera on for you, since many operators have told me that it helps them stay engaged during class. But then I see myself touching my face all the time. During a pandemic, this isn’t exactly the epiphany I wanted to have.

6. Most operators need a little help, but a large majority of you have learned a new piece of technology. I want to tell you, as hard as it was for me to change my teaching process, I know it was just as hard for you. I commend you for your willingness to roll with this change. You have done a great job taking classes and getting your normal work done during a pandemic!

5. Webinars can be fun, but they’re a lot of work. Behind the scenes I have had to ask my coworkers to help me proctor classes, watch for questions and track attendance.

4. Mute is a wonderful thing. We’ve all seen the funny videos where someone on Zoom forgets that their microphone or camera is on while they are picking their nose (or worse). We haven’t had any incidents like this, but many of you have heard my dog Abby—she spends most mornings barking at squirrels in the front yard.

3. Since you can only see me from my chest up on Zoom, during the pandemic I’ve worn shorts to work for the first time ever.

2. I miss seeing everyone, yes you! I know, you can’t believe it. I miss seeing you, getting out of my office and driving all over the state. I hope we can get back to face-to-face classes soon, but I know that will probably not be until 2021.

1. You really miss me, and when I say me, I mean the donuts and coffee I bring to class. (Don’t worry Zach, I will bring extra treats the next time I see you!) I look forward to seeing you all soon. Please stay safe and stay well!

Apprenticeship Program Expanding this Fall

by Paula Jackson
Apprenticeship Program Coordinator

Vermont Rural Water’s apprenticeship program is expanding this year to create new opportunities for job training at water and wastewater treatment facilities. Among the changes are flexible apprenticeships for small systems and modifications for the COVID-19 world we now live in.

Apprenticeships are designed to teach new operators hands-on tasks through on-the-job training as well as prepare them to pass the certification exams through online/classroom education and self-study.

We are offering six different apprenticeship tracks beginning this fall:
- Water Treatment (2-year program)
- Water Distribution (2-year program)
- Small Water System (1-year program)
- Wastewater Treatment (2-year program)
- Small Wastewater System (1-year program)
- Water and Wastewater (3-year program)

New apprentices can start as soon as October 1, 2020.
For more information, contact pjackson@vtruralwater.org or (802) 342-1356.

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