



WEFMAX 2021 - Utah

THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2021

OPERATOR TRAINING INITIATIVES

PRESENTED BY:

ALLISON WOOD, CAE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MICHIGAN WEA

Topics

- ▶ Joint Expo & Operators Day
- ▶ Operator Training Classes
- ▶ Operator Scholarship



JOINT EXPO
— **& OPERATORS DAY** —

Joint Expo & Operators Day

- ▶ 2-day Joint Conference with MI-AWWA
- ▶ Held the first Tuesday & Wednesday every February in downtown Lansing
- ▶ Different from each organization's annual conferences which are held separately later in the year.
- ▶ Joint Expo & Operators Day's focus is primarily on operators

Joint Expo & Operators Day

- ▶ First held in 1992 and has been growing ever since!
- ▶ Represents about 10% of our annual income
- ▶ MI-AWWA handles the expo hall (booth registration, all exhibitor communication)
- ▶ MWEA handles the training side (including Operators Day training, registration, and auxiliary training: Infrastructure Funding Seminar, How to Talk to the Media, etc.)

Joint Expo & Operators Day

- ▶ Operators Day agenda topics:
 - ▶ Electrical
 - ▶ GIS
 - ▶ SCADA
 - ▶ Valves
 - ▶ Motor Testing
 - ▶ Safety
 - ▶ Cyber Security

Joint Expo & Operators Day

- ▶ 8 presentations are selected
- ▶ FOUR 45 minute presentations each morning
- ▶ Different agenda each day, attendees are encouraged to attend both days
- ▶ 300 attendees per ballroom
- ▶ They have the rest of the afternoon to explore the expo hall and have lunch



Joint Expo & Operators Day

- ▶ 2020 was our largest year so far!
- ▶ We were lucky it happened just 1 month prior to the start of the pandemic
- ▶ **1,125** participants in trainings
- ▶ **509** individuals who just came for the exhibits
- ▶ **153** companies participated
- ▶ More than **700** company staff working the exhibit booths

Joint Expo & Operators Day

- ▶ 2021 switched to a Virtual Operators Day Training ONLY
- ▶ Still had 2 days worth of education for operators
- ▶ Over 600 participants joined us over the 2 days!
 - ▶ Better than we had expected!
- ▶ Offered On Demand until May 31
 - ▶ Use sproutvideo.com for tracking

Joint Expo & Operators Day

- ▶ Polled vendors, and they were NOT interested in a virtual expo hall
- ▶ Added SPONSOR options:
 - ▶ \$2,500 Sustaining Level (10 available)
 - ▶ **Only 2 signed up**
 - ▶ \$750 Contributing Sponsors (unlimited available)
 - ▶ **21 signed up**
- ▶ These came in lower than we had anticipated, especially the Sustaining Level

Joint Expo & Operators Day



- ▶ 2021 net revenue was down 40% from 2020
- ▶ Close to what we budgeted for, the increase in attendance helped offset what we didn't get in sponsors
- ▶ Hopeful that 2022 we will be back in person for the 30th Anniversary of Joint Expo & Operators Day



Operator Training Classes

Operator Training Classes

- ▶ 13 classes currently offered:
 - ▶ Purpose and Fundamentals of Wastewater Treatment
 - ▶ Basic Health & Safety Practices in Water Systems
 - ▶ Fundamentals of Wastewater Math 1 and Math 2
 - ▶ Fundamentals of Activated Sludge 1 and Sludge 2
 - ▶ Fundamentals of Preliminary, Primary and Secondary Treatment
 - ▶ Fundamentals of Wastewater Disinfection and Tertiary Treatment
 - ▶ Fundamentals of Solids Handling
 - ▶ Fundamentals of Anaerobic Digester Operation and Control
 - ▶ Fundamentals of Collection Systems
 - ▶ Fundamentals of Maintenance Practices 1 and Maintenance Practices 2

Operator Training Classes

- ▶ Several years ago we added Operator Exam Prep Classes
 - ▶ 10 – 15 students per class
 - ▶ In Michigan we have 4 levels of Municipal Wastewater Operator: A, B, C, and D
 - ▶ A&B exam prep and C&D exam prep are grouped together
 - ▶ Creating a D only class with extra tips for first-time exam takers

Operator Training Classes

- ▶ 2020 numbers:
 - ▶ 40 classes total
 - ▶ 200 attendees total
- ▶ 2021 numbers:
 - ▶ 22 classes YTD
 - ▶ Expect to be at 50-60 by EOY
 - ▶ 250 attendees YTD
 - ▶ Expect to be at 600 by EOY

Operator Training Classes

- ▶ 10 NEW classes in development:
 - ▶ Funded by the WEF MA Seed Grant
 - ▶ 3 Maintenance Classes: Pumps, Lubrication, and Electrical
 - ▶ Advanced Collections Systems
 - ▶ Remedial Math
 - ▶ Lagoon Operations
 - ▶ Laboratory Practices
 - ▶ Process Modeling and Controls
 - ▶ Utility of the Future 101
 - ▶ Intro to Supervision/Management

Operator Training Classes



Operator Training Classes

- ▶ WRRT Credential Program:
 - ▶ Was developed to encourage those who are new to the industry to take our classes to build a good foundation of knowledge
 - ▶ Also shows their employer they are able to start and finish something
 - ▶ Is a stepping stone to the first level of their operator license
 - ▶ 105 graduates so far!



Operator Scholarship

Operator Scholarship

- ▶ Water Resource Recovery Technician (WRRT) Future Leader Scholarship
- ▶ Started in 2017
- ▶ \$1,000 each, up to 4 awarded annually

Operator Scholarship

- ▶ Applicants must currently possess a valid Michigan Wastewater Operators license and be planning to pursue either a Class B or Class A license
- ▶ Can use funds towards classes, books, and tuition costs

Questions?

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