

One-hundred forty-sixth meeting
 Water and Wastewater Advisory Council
 September 25, 2008
 Bozeman, Montana

CALL TO ORDER

The one-hundred forty-sixth meeting of the Water and Wastewater Operator’s Advisory Council was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Joanne “Joni” Hall Emrick, Kalispell, Council Chairperson. Other Council members present included: Roger Skogen, Donald Coffman, Tony Porrazzo, Carol Reifschneider and Jon Dilliard. Member Grant Burroughs was not present.

Department personnel attending all or portions of the meeting were Shelley Nolan, Operator Certification Program Manager, Reta Therriault, Operator Certification Technician, and Bill Bahr, Environmental Science Specialist.

MINUTES APPROVED	The minutes from the previously-held meeting on November 2, 2007 were unanimously approved, following a motion by Carol Reifschneider and seconded by Jon Dilliard.
Advisory Council Member Update	<p>Shelley Nolan noted that Grant Burroughs’ term will end October 16, 2008. Grant will be notified that his term is ending and if he is interested in serving another term he should send the Operator Certification Program a letter. The letter will be sent to the Governors office along with a cover letter. If Grant is not interested in another term the position will be posted and then a list of interested operators will be sent to the Governor along with a cover letter.</p> <p>Donald Coffman requested that his cell, home and fax numbers be added to the members list. Jon Dilliard gave a new cell phone number. Roger Skogen also wanted his cell phone number added to the members list.</p>
PWS Update	The members were provided an updated organizational chart and a contact list of the Public Water and Subdivisions Bureau with a brief description of what each person does along with their telephone numbers. Jon and Shelley explained that the Permitting and Compliance section of Public Water was given the go a head by Governor Brian Schweitzer to hire twelve new employees in response to an EPA primacy report. The Billings & Kalispell will split 3 positions (1.5 each) and the remaining positions will be hired for the Helena office. Shelley is hoping to have most of the new employees hired by the end of this year.

<p>New Certification Classifications and Updates</p>	<p>Shelley told the council that Anderson-Montgomery Consulting Engineers was awarded the contract to create the industrial/collections examinations. Scott Anderson has begun the process of collecting information on the systems that will be affected by the new exams. Shelley also announced that the Cadmus Group was awarded the contract to upgrade the Community and Non-Transient Non-Community Summary Guides. Cadmus will also create a standard training guide for trainers. This will ensure that all of our trainers are training the same way which will prevent confusion. This project should take 12 – 18 months to complete.</p> <p>Jon Dilliard noted that in order for the collections certification to become a reality support is needed from the systems that will be affected. Shelley said that she had gone through the files and looked at systems that have had problems. Collection certification is voluntary for systems 3,300 or less. Some of the reasons discussed for needing a collections certification: Lowbagger.com – major sewage flows into the Yellowstone River. Operator has hepatitis C. Bill Bahr said communication would be useful when there is a petrol leak. Roger Skogen said that he has learned so much about collections – even in small systems. Shelley said that last summer or fall a gas station in Kalispell had a fuel leak, Bill Bahr talked about K-Mart flushing the parking lot in Kalispell, and Tony talked about someone throwing a hose in the basement and ended up with a daphnia bloom.</p>
<p>WATER SCHOOLS AND IN-OFFICE EXAMS, COMPLIANCE STATUS REPORT AND ENFORCEMENT UPDATE</p>	<p>The statistics for the scheduled exams taken from 02/22/08 – 05/23/08, and the exams taken in-office from 11/02/07 – 09/23/08 were reviewed. While reviewing the statistics it was noted that some of the pass percentages have gone down in the upper classes of distribution, treatment and wastewater. There was a group discussion regarding the reasons for the decrease in passing – expecting to learn everything at the exam prep sessions, signing up just before the exam and not having enough time to study, and some people have not received their study materials before attending the school. Reta said that some of the upper level systems (Billings, Butte & Helena) allow the applicant one year to take and pass the exam. The applicant waits until just before the year is up to take the exam and then wants to know if they passed in enough time to re-take the exam if need be. When the old exams were used and a person failed, they could make an appointment to come to the office and go over the questions they missed on the exam and the correct</p>

answer was supplied to them. The new ABC exams are confidential and not up for review in order to maintain the integrity of the exams. Shelley also noted that some of the people doing training sessions were new and some of the information they used might not have been helpful. This should change once the train-the-trainer manuals are finished. Shelley heard that an applicant from the City of Butte recorded all of the questions & answers choices and memorized them. He had to retake the exam but didn't get the same exam. The council discussed this and was in agreement that before the exam all applicants must shut off their cell phones and put them away. While the exams are in progress the proctor needs to keep close watch for recording devices, cameras, etc. Jon proposed that once the application is received by the operator certification office and the study materials have been sent, the applicant has to wait 30 days before taking the exam; which would allow for study time. If the applicant fails the exam there would be another 30 day waiting period before retaking the exam. This was unanimously approved following a motion by Tony Porrazzo and a second by Roger Skogen. Reta will ask Jason Newton, DEQ System Analyst, if there is a way to track applications and examinations in 30 day intervals.

Tony Porrazzo suggested that if the applicant wants to take the exam in one of our DEQ offices then the exam fee should be raised from \$70 to \$100 – this would encourage people to take exams at the scheduled exam sites and not take DEQ employees away from their regular job duties. Reta said that by law the Operator Certification Program has to offer one scheduled exam per year and at this time there are six scheduled per year. Bill Bahr had suggested that a questioner be passed out at the time of the exam. A WWO Certification After-Test Survey Draft was provided for everyone to look over. There are four questions on the survey:

1. How many hours did you spend preparing for the exam?
2. What materials did you find useful in this preparation?
3. If you attended an Exam Preparation session, do you feel you enriched your studying experience?
4. What subjects do you feel you needed more preparation on?
5. What advice would you give new operators getting ready to take an exam?

It was decided to start passing out the after test survey to determine if there is something that can be done to raise the

	<p>exam passing percentage and provide better training. Shelley noted that once the trainers are training the same this should also help raise the scores.</p> <p>The Operator Certification program will look into creating a brochure and a career day packet. This packet would include a CD about the water/wastewater certification program, the different classifications of certification, etc... It was noted that AWWA has created pamphlets with good information on them and they should be looked at.</p> <p>The compliance status report and enforcement update were not included in the packets because they have not been updated since Lizbeth Geary resigned from her position. They will be provided at the next council meeting.</p>
<p>CECRC UPDATE AND ATP's RECEIVED</p>	<p>Reta provided the council with an outline of what was discussed at the last CECRC meeting. During the meeting Lee Wolfe was nominated and accepted the Chair position and Gary Workman accepted the nomination for the Vice Chair. The CECRC had two openings to replace Shelley Nolan and Judy Sass. John Camden and Kevin Kundert submitted letters of interest. John was approved and a denial letter was sent to Kevin because it was unanimously agreed upon that it would be a conflict of interest for Kevin, as a for profit training provider that provides training to our operators to also sit on the CECRC committee. A letter of interest was received from Paul Torok, MAP, to become a member of the CECRC. Jenny will contact Pam Higgins, Regional Director of MAP and determine if Paul will be a representative of MAP.</p> <p>Reta Therriault told the Advisory Council that Paul Torok had been accepted as a member of the CECRC but was having health problems and had to leave his position at MAP. Reta received a letter from Pam Higgins requesting that Lee Michalsky, MAP Training Director, replace Paul on the CECRC.</p> <p>The CECRC members voiced concern that the baby-boomers are getting to the age of retirement and that something needs to be done to attract applicants to replace the operators that retire. Carol noted that at the 2005 Fall Water School in Bozeman the Advisory Council held a round table discussion and advised those in attendance that it was time to look for new operators.</p>

	<p>The following Alternative Training Packets were reviewed and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Learning College – Payson, AZ • Sparrow Technical Services – Albuquerque, NM • CEU Plan – Brooksville, FL • OWP (Office of Water Programs) – Sacramento, CA <p>Pending approvals were provided to all that requested which state that after an operator from MT takes the course a survey and evaluation will be completed. The submittal from California State University – Sacramento will receive an approval and DEQ will review the ATP application form and guidelines to see if it will be possible for them to apply for an ATP status or if another level of approval will need to be developed.</p> <p>Reta said that she received an email from Lee Michalsky, MAP, stating that the average age of operators in Wyoming is 59. Reta provided the council with a sheet that broke down the certification classifications with the average age. Montana water operator’s average age is 47.5; wastewater’s average age is 50.7, and the overall average operator age as 49.1.</p>								
<p>RENEWALS & REVOKED OPERATORS UPDATE</p>	<p>Reta told the council that 1,651 renewal notices were mailed out in April. She received notice from 38 operators that they would not renew. Some of the reasons for not renewing were moving out of state, their system shut down, no longer lived in the subdivision they operated, 2 deaths, and have not been an operator for years.</p> <p>The renewal fees through September 19, 2008 break down:</p> <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>Water</td> <td>\$39,940.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wastewater</td> <td>\$26,100.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Late Fees</u></td> <td><u>\$ 3,360.00</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>\$69,400.00</td> </tr> </table> <p>The number of revoked operators has not been determined at this time but will be reported at the next meeting.</p>	Water	\$39,940.00	Wastewater	\$26,100.00	<u>Late Fees</u>	<u>\$ 3,360.00</u>	Total	\$69,400.00
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<p>GRANT REIMBURSEMENT UPDATE</p>	<p>The council was given a breakdown of the grant reimbursements processed from 2006 – 2008; both calendar and fiscal year:</p> <p>Calendar year 2006: 340 processed for a total of \$38,527.26 Fiscal year 2006: 317 processed for a total of \$33,485.22</p> <p>*Calendar year 2007: 543 processed for a total of \$42,134.56</p>								

	<p>*Fiscal year 2007: 528 processed for a total of \$39,807.08</p> <p>Calendar year 2008: 117 processed for a total of \$19,476.16</p> <p>Fiscal year 2008: 184 processed for a total of \$29,363.12</p> <p>* Reta noted that 2006 the Operator Certification Program requested and received an extension on the grant reimbursement which would account for 2007 increase and the 2008 decrease.</p> <p>Carol Reifschneider asked for the dollar amount balance of the grant reimbursement money. Reta did not have that information but will provide it at the next council meeting.</p>
DATE OF NEXT MEETING	The date of the next meeting will be May 1, 2009
ADJOURN MEETING	Motion to adjourn by Donald Coffman; second by Roger Skogen.