



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Potable Water Supply Operators Association
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State's Water Plant Operators Recognize "Top Operators" In the State at Annual Event

2012 Operators of the Year named in Springfield

Springfield, Ill. –The Illinois Potable Water Supply Operators Association and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency recognized nine outstanding professionals in their individual categories of service. These operators produce and supply drinking water for Illinois consumers.

Nearly 800 members and guests of the Illinois Potable Water Operators Association (IPWSOA) honored Don Buerk (City of Pana), Scott Bailey, (City of Monticello), and Colleen Kelly, (Justice-Willow Springs Water Commission), for their outstanding work in consistently supplying safe drinking water on a daily basis to consumers, and their contributions to the industry.

Operators are rated on the day-to-day operation of facilities that use surface water or groundwater as their water source, or purchase water from another source and distribute it to consumers. "Operator of the Year" is the highest professional honor operators can receive in recognition of service and performance in the waterworks industry. In addition, finalists are designated in each category.

Winners and finalists are nominated by their peers, screened by a pre-selection committee, and chosen by a second committee that interviews nominees at their facilities during a fly-around of the state. Committee members, all operators, use a numeric system to rate nominees. The results are then tallied, and winners finalized by computer. The two other finalists in the Surface Water Category are Jack Cosner, City of Jacksonville, and Perry Musgrave, Lake of Egypt Water and Wastewater District.

Don Buerk is the Water Superintendent of the City of Pana, and is responsible for supplying water to 2,874 service connections, with an average of 0.6 million gallons pumped to consumers each day. Don instituted a jar testing program to monitor treatment effectiveness, and installed peristaltic pumps with variable frequency drives to conserve energy. Future plans are to start a meter replacement program. In addition to 22 years in the water industry, Don is very involved in his community. He assists with animal control and is a member of his church's choir. Don has been a presenter at IPWSOA conferences for many years. Pana is a surface water treatment supply.

These operators were honored during the Association's 81st annual conference at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. Members from all regions of the state met to stay current on new industry regulations, equipment and processes. Winners of the 2012 awards were announced and received their trophies during the three day event.

Speakers and displays at the 2012 conference focused on safe operation, compliance with State and federal regulations, and new operational and analytical techniques and equipment.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the IPWSOA co-sponsor the conference. The Agency oversees operations of approximately 1,800 public water supplies serving Illinois and their compliance with federal and state drinking water regulations.