



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Potable Water Supply Operators Association
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Outstanding Operators in Drinking Water Recognized at State-wide Event

2014 Operators of the Year named in Springfield

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

Drinking water professionals and guests of the Illinois Potable Water Operators Association (IPWSOA) honored **John J. Boldovin**, Village of Hazel Crest, as Distribution Operator of the Year. **Michael Hartigan**, City of Countryside, IL, and **Penny Pinkstaff**, City of Lebanon, IL, were named runners-up for the top spot. All three were recognized for their outstanding work in supplying safe drinking water on a daily basis to consumers, as well as their contributions to the industry and community.

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

John Boldovin, Water and Sewer Superintendent of the **Village of Hazel Crest**, was selected as Operator of the Year in the Distribution Category. Boldovin is responsible for the distribution of 1.5 million gallons of water each day to homes and businesses served by the Village. He and his employees also maintain 70 miles of water mains and 743 fire hydrants, and complete all reporting and sampling required to determine water supply safety and document compliance with state and federal standards. Baldovin was responsible for initiating the upgrade and improvement of the tank building and SCADA monitoring system, a tank inspection system, and unidirectional flushing to ensure optimal performance of the distribution system.

Michael Hartigan, Lead Water Operator in Responsible Charge, distributes 1.68 million gallons of water each day to 1555 service connections through 33.4 miles of water main. He oversees the entire water distribution system, including water quality, billing, equipment maintenance, emergency repairs, and is on call 24/7. He provided oversight to renovation of the pumping station in 2007, painting of the water tank in 2010, a new lift station in 2013 and water main replacement in 2014.

These improvements resulted in the Pleasantview Fire Protection District being able to increase their ISO rating to level 2, as water distribution is credited with 40% of the assessment. This increase provides lower insurance rates for both residents and business customers, placing the fire district in the top 1.25% of all fire districts nationwide. Hartigan also directs a commercial meter testing program, backflow prevention program and sump pump inspection program.

Penny Pinkstaff, City of Lebanon Superintendent of Water and Wastewater, is responsible for all operations of the Lebanon Distribution System. The system distributes 400,000 gallons of water through 31 miles of water mains to 1,876 customers throughout the system. Penny initiated GIS mapping of the distribution system to help identify maintenance needs and troubleshoot problems; implement an automatic withdrawal payment option for water billing; install radio-read meters with usage tracking, and a Code Red-One Call Notification System. She participates annually as a speaker in classes at McKendree College to help interested students prepare to become qualified as Certified Operators with the Illinois EPA.

There are approximately 4000 certified drinking water operators in the State of Illinois. These operators were nominated and selected by owners, operators and other professionals in the drinking water industry. Finalists are then reviewed by other certified drinking water operators who serve on the Operator of the Year Nomination and Final Selection Committees of IPWSOA. 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.

Operators of the Year and nominees were honored during the Association's 83rd annual conference at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Springfield. Members from all areas of the state met to stay current on new industry regulations, equipment and processes. Winners of the 2014 awards were announced and received their trophies during the three day event.

Speakers and displays at the 2014 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.