



# *NEWS RELEASE*

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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 **Charlie Douglas**, City of Lake Forest, IL, as Surface Water Operator of the Year. **Scott Wilmouth**, **Kincaid Area Water System**, Carbondale, IL was named runner-up for the top spot. Both 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 treat surface water from their water 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.

**Charlie Douglas**, Assistant Chief Operator, **City of Lake Forest, IL**, was selected as Operator of the Year in the Surface Water Category. Douglas is responsible for the daily operations and direction of staff needed to ensure that the plant produces a high quality of drinking water at all times. Through his efforts, Lake Forest has been able to implement improvements to make operation more efficient and economical, and address problems early on. He helped make the transition from conventional filtration to the membrane filter plant operation 10 years ago, and continues to hold in-plant instruction for operators to continue to improve their skills and optimize plant operations. Lake Forest distributes 14 million gallons of water each day through 160 miles of water main to 6,723 homes and businesses served by the City. Douglas and his staff maintain and operate the treatment facilities used to produce water from Lake Michigan, completing all reporting and sampling required to determine water supply safety and document compliance with state and federal standards.

**Scott Wilmouth** is Superintendent of the **Kincaid Area Water System**, located near Carbondale, IL. Water for this system is drawn from Kincaid Lake into the plant which treats 2.2 million gallons

of water each day using a surface water filtration plant. Scott Wilmouth oversees all operators and directs the activities of the Kincaid Area Water System, which is a water wholesaler that provides treated water to two cities, four villages, four water districts and one private water company. Water is distributed through 50 miles of water mains. Wilmouth is proud of the operators and their ability to work well together as a team to provide the best water quality possible to the supplies they serve. He has developed a valve maintenance program, detailed maintenance manuals, and a map of water mains throughout the system to increase efficiency of the supply and improve response time to problems such as water main breaks.

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.

These operators 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.