



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Potable Water Supply Operators Association
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Elizabeth Doellman Recognized as an Outstanding Drinking Water Operator at State-wide Event

2015 Operators of the Year named in Springfield

Springfield, IL –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 public water supply consumers.

Drinking water professionals and guests of the Illinois Potable Water Operators Association (IPWSOA) honored **Jim R. Burris, City of Wood River, IL**, as Groundwater Operator of the Year. **Duane T. Ifft, City of Fairbury**, and **Elizabeth Doellman, American Water Company-Champaign, IL**, were named finalists 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 treat surface water or groundwater 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.

Elizabeth Doellman, American Water Company-Champaign, IL, is one of three finalists for the Groundwater category. She is a Water Quality Supervisor for Illinois-American Water Company, and is based out of the Champaign facility. In addition to her responsibilities for Champaign's two water plants, she travels to facilities in Peoria, Pontiac and Streator, IL. Doellman works with staff at each of these plants on all water quality issues and questions -- including the 2013 flood in Peoria. Her efforts help produce and maintain safe drinking water for all these facilities. She has 8 years of experience in the water industry and holds a Class A Water Supply Operator Certification. Her nomination cited her ability to effectively relate to others, "Elizabeth is excellent at communicating with the operators, by listening and providing constructive feedback, this has created an open and honest work environment."

Champaign serves 83,500 water consumers including approximately 43,000 students at the University of Illinois. The water plants produce an average 20 million gallons per day, and deliver it to consumers through 51,000 water service connections.

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 84th 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 2015 awards were announced and received their trophies during the three day event.

Speakers and displays at the 2015 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.