



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Potable Water Supply Operators Association
1330 West State Street, P O Box 1146
Jacksonville, Illinois 62651-1146
Phone: 217/652-1869

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CONTACT: Lou Allyn Byus, 217-652-1869

Chaundra Smith Named an Outstanding Drinking Water Operator and Recognized 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 **Brent Reneau, City of Hamilton, IL**, as Surface Water Operator of the Year. **Chaundra Smith, City of Decatur, IL**, and **Mike Ziegler, City of Effingham**, were named finalists for the top spot. All 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.

Chaundra Smith, Chief Water Plant Operator, **City of Decatur, IL**, was selected as one of three finalists for Operator of the Year in the Surface Water Category. She has 12 years experience in the water industry and holds a Class A Water Operators Certification. Smith is responsible for the operational control of the water treatment and pumping process at the Decatur plant, and supervises a staff of 7 operators. She is also responsible for sampling and water testing. Smith hails from Marshall, Illinois, and played college basketball and softball at Milliken University.

Decatur is a surface water supply which pumps water from Lake Decatur into a lime softening plant rated at 36 million gallons of water per day. Decatur serves 31,400 service connections through 531 miles of water main that includes 4,268 fire hydrants.

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 then 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 or revised 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.