



NEWS RELEASE

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

2016 Operators of the Year named in Springfield

Springfield, IL –The Illinois Potable Water Supply Operators Association and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency recognized 6 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 **Jason Heid**, Village of Mahomet, IL, as Water Treatment Operator of the Year. **Rocky Horvath and Matthew Vasey**, Village of Fox Lake, IL were named as runners-up for the top spot. The finalists 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 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.

Jason Heid, Water/Wastewater Superintendent, **Village of Mahomet, IL**, was selected as Operator of the Year in the Water Treatment Category. Heid is responsible for the daily operations and direction of staff as needed to ensure that the plant produces high quality drinking water at all times. Through his efforts, the Village of Mahomet has been able to implement improvements, properly maintain existing equipment, and provide redundancy to ensure reliable operation. Heid recently completed a master plan for the Village's water system. His nomination form stated "The Village is a great position for the future as a result of Jason's strategic efforts and planning."

The Village of Mahomet distributes 520,000 gallons of water each day through 40 miles of water main to 2,400 homes and businesses. Heid and his staff operate the treatment facilities used to produce potable water and complete all reporting and sampling required to determine water supply safety and document compliance with state and federal standards.

Rocky Horvath is Supervisor at the **Village of Fox Lake**, located just north of Chicago, IL. Water for this system is drawn from wells at two different plants separated geographically by the Fox

River. The two plants treat between 0.5 to 1 million gallons of water a day. Horvath is responsible for planning and directing all aspects of the water department's operations and ensuring that regulatory requirements are met. His nominator wrote "Mr. Horvath has been in this field for 20 years. His dedication to quality and customer service is extraordinary."

Matthew Vasey is the Chief Operator at the **Village of Fox Lake**. Vasey has worked for the water department for 6 years and has been employed by the Village for a total of 14 years. Vasey is responsible for supervising staff, water quality testing, and daily operation of the water system. Vasey is the safety officer for the department and is active in the cross-connection compliance program. His nominator wrote "Matt's knowledge and dedication to duty make him an asset to the Village of Fox Lake. He has numerous commendation and thank you letters in his file illustrating his dedication to our residents."

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. Committee members, all operators, use a numeric system to rate nominees.

These operators were honored during the Association's 85th annual conference at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. Members from all areas of the state met to stay current on new industry regulations, equipment and processes. Winners of the 2016 awards were announced and received their plaques during the three day event.

Speakers and displays at the 2016 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.