

The Circuit Rider Visit (much more than “Leak Detection”)

By Richard Winters
NYRWA Circuit Rider I



As you all know, a big percentage of our requested visits to the water systems we visit are to help find leaks. However, several systems we have been to find out that we can bring a lot more. We offer operational advice, financial advice and contact information, compliance assistance, and most importantly, we bring knowledge we have acquired from

other operators throughout the state. Another thing you need to know is the support that the Circuit Rider has in the staff of the New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA). We have a wide array of combined knowledge in the industry. This means that if you ask us something we can't answer right away, there is a good chance that somebody in our organization will be able to, or will know someone who can.

When I first came on board with the NYRWA, I thought that we just answered calls for assistance. I was told that when there are no calls we were to stop by systems and offer any help we could. At first I thought we would be treated like salesmen, you know what I mean, but thanks to the education I have received from the other operators throughout the state, I have been able to share a lot of the tricks of the trade I've picked up along the way. One example of this happened when I went to a system for yes, “leak detection”. While searching for the leak, the topic of a project to connect a new well to their distribution system came up. I was told that the Village had been trying to get funding for the project, but were informed that it wasn't available. I had just received an e-mail from the head of the agency that told them this. He was asking if I knew of any systems in that area needing funding because time was running out on money that had been earmarked for a zone that this system was in. The end result of that “leak detection” visit turned out to be, that system getting \$500,000.00 to install the pipeline. On another visit, yes another “leak”, I happened to be in the lab while the operator was taking some tests and observed the results of an iron test taken post filtration. Noticing the result to be what I considered high, I asked the operator if this was a normal reading. When told yes, I asked some questions about their treatment. After going over the treatment methods being used, I suggested that they relocate the injection point of their sequestering chemical to the head of the filter. This would help them by stopping the oxidation of the iron, when hit with chlorine after filtration, and reduce the ongoing problem of brown water complaints they were getting from the people in the distribution system.

On another visit for “leak detection” I found out that a total of six service lines had been installed at the end of the Village's main transmission line. The leaks we found on these lines were causing the property of a Village resident to be flooded. Since the lines were not owned by the Village, and the meters installed on these lines were in the homes, one over 2,000 feet away, there was no way to make the homeowner repair the leak. I went to the Mayor and suggested they install a

meter pit at the end of the Village line, which would enable them to charge for the lost water, giving the homeowner a much greater incentive to fix the leak. Keep in mind; I went there for “leak detection”. I could go on and on with other examples similar to these, but I think you get the picture by now.

Another thing I want to share is the value we bring with us as a result of the relationships and knowledge we get from our Associate Members Businesses. I have been able to help systems in finding companies to help them in many different ways as a result of getting to know these business members and what they do. Although we can't endorse or recommend any particular Associate Member Business for a project you might have, we can suggest you look in your NYRWA directory for the services you require.

As most of you know, the Circuit Riders of the New York Rural Water Association also carry a lot of equipment used in the business and offer training and demonstrations on it. We offer assistance in the use of your computers to make your jobs a little easier. We have been helping with your Annual Water Quality Reports, Vulnerability Assessments and Emergency Response Plans, as well as, creating and customizing reports for several systems. Check out our web site: www.nyruralwater.org for downloads of templates, also news, classified, training and much more can be found at the site.

I hope this article will help define the purpose of the Circuit Rider Program and help others in understanding that even though a Circuit Rider may be called to a system for “leak detection” as a primary purpose, often much more is accomplished in these visits. ♪