

Message From the President

Submitted by Florence Braunius
NYRWA President



“Summertime and the livin' is easy”, are we envious of the time when Porgy and Bess could idle away their days, unconcerned with their situation? Rural Water has more hot topics than one summer should carry. The EPA failing to fund the 2007 contract raised the temperature early in the year. Each of us was

sizzling and shared the heat with our representatives.

Pat Scalera, John O'Connell and I returned from Rally just in time for NY Rural Water Technical Conference. Our condolences to Pat and her family with the loss of her mother, Pat was unable to attend the conference. We missed her enthusiastic welcomes and relentless attention to detail, but her staff is well trained and carried the conference off without a hitch. Thank you to each one of you for a job well done.

So where does this leave New York Rural Water when it comes to the three EPA positions? Fortunately, we have some reserve funds to get us through the initial turmoil. What action are we taking? Let's look at each program. Regarding the Training and Technical Assistance Program, the Board of Directors decided on May 16, 2007, to allow the training classes that have been scheduled through August to continue. After August, there will be changes and you will be hearing more on this after June 5th when the Board of Directors meet again. Our Groundwater Specialist is currently, as of this writing, working with 13 communities. Some are our members, some have yet to join and the NYRWA Board of Directors strongly feel that we have established our reserves in the event program funding was dropped. It is only because of this fiscal planning that we are able to allow any of these programs to continue. We have asked communities to help protect our reserves by paying the costs incurred for expenses such a mileage, copies, etc. Steve Winkley will continue to work with most of these communities but will have to limit the amount of time spent on the plans, due to other avenues of work that do provide financial reimbursement to the association.

The Source Water Protection Program is basically in the same situation, work will continue on a limited scale, and communities will be asked to contribute toward the costs.

We are all researching other funding streams and also looking at what the future is for training in New York State. There are grant programs out there that fit nicely with what we are already geared up to do. We also need to look at the future to determine just where there are gaps in training that is needed in NYS. The Board of Directors feel strongly that we

need to aggressively pursue ways to maintain our fund balance as much as possible.

New York Rural Water has required the communities that are continuing to receive these services to contact their Health Departments, their Congressional Leaders, and Senators Clinton and Schumer, to let them know what this decision has cost each of them. If you are afraid that your certification may be in jeopardy due to cut backs in training, I ask you to do the same. If your community water supply may be in jeopardy due to lack of planning for protection, ask your local elected officials to contact the same people. EPA needs to be held accountable for their decision not to provide these programs, and our representatives in Washington are the people we need to contact.

New York Rural Water has information regarding your congressional district, letter templates and other contact information. We need to present a strong, united voice to Washington, DC at this most serious time.

Thank you to all who have sent letters, offered suggestions, and have assisted with phone calls to your representatives. This makes an impact and we cannot do this without you.

Have an enjoyable summer and we will do our best to keep you informed. ♠