

# New York Rural Water Pioneer Dave Barker Marks His Retirement

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**D**avid Barker, one of the driving forces of the New York Rural Water Association from the early years, will be retiring from his current position as City Manager/City of Sherrill as of October 31, 2005. Dave became a member of the New York Rural Water Association shortly after he

became Supt. of Public Works for the Village of Camden in 1980. He quickly discovered the need for an organization that could meet the needs of small water and wastewater systems. His involvement with the NYRWA increased and he became Director-at-Large in 1988. He has since served this Association as Board Member, President, and National Director. He is currently a member of the NYRWA Advisory Council. All of us at NYRWA wish Dave all the best as he rounds this curve on the path of life. An avid golfer, I am sure he will take advantage of his free time to enjoy more time on the links. In September 2005, I had the opportunity to sit down with Dave and ask him a few questions pertaining to his experiences with NYRWA. The following interview is the result of that conversation.



**NYRWA:** Dave, when and where did you get your start in the water/wastewater Industry?

**Dave Barker:** I was hired in 1980 as the Superintendent of Public Works for the Village of Camden. It quickly became apparent to me that the water and wastewater systems would take a

lion's share of my time. The need to have myself and my staff certified and then remain certified through training opportunities was critical. By serving the small systems, the newly formed NYRWA was able to meet our needs.



**NYRWA:** When did your involvement with NYRWA begin?

**Dave Barker:** We began to attend NYRWA training sessions as those opportunities arose. I soon fell in with Harold Woolshlager, Dr. Tommy Thompson, George Flummer,

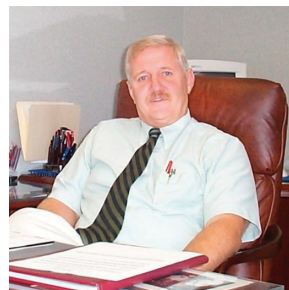
and a few others. We hit it off from the start and we shared the same ideas and concepts.



**NYRWA:** At that time, did you believe that the New York Rural Water Association could become the Association it is today?

**Dave Barker:** I do not think anyone could have envisioned our success! What NYRWA does on a daily basis, is exactly what small systems need. No way could we have guessed at that

time that we would now be the leaders of the industry, although even at that time the dedication of NYRWA leadership was apparent.



**NYRWA:** In your opinion, what do you consider to be the most significant changes you have witnessed with the NYRWA?

**Dave Barker:** I believe the philosophy of the NYRWA has not changed, it is just applied in a larger and grander form than I could have expected. The growth

of the Technical Conference is impressive. The first Tech Conference I attended was at the Radisson in Utica. It was held in one small room and as I remember, there were more vendors than attendees.

**NYRWA:** What will be the significant challenges of the future for NYRWA?

**Dave Barker:** Keeping abreast, or in front of changes in regulations, making regulations based on sound science, and helping systems understand compliance issues.

**NYRWA:** Any suggestions as to how we can continue to improve NYRWA?

**Dave Barker:** The strength of the NYRWA is and always has been strong leadership at the Board level. The Board of Directors are all volunteers who have at one time or another worked in the trenches. There is a certain comfort level felt by the operators when contacting and relaying information to these men and women.

**NYRWA:** Name a few people that you feel have been successful in bringing about changes to NYRWA?