

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

by Jamie Herman,
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As most of you are well aware, the majority of these articles are focused on work that needs to be completed, or new rules and regulations that you will need to comply with for the rest of your career. I thought it would be nice to lighten the mood just a bit. Any discussion of sunshine and warm temperatures should be appreciated, since I'm sure it will be cold outside as you read this article.

I certainly don't mean to imply that it isn't important to flush hydrants, locate water leaks, or exercise those valves, but isn't it equally important to maintain yourselves? Statistics show that employees who use their vacation time are more productive, and suffer less lost time due to injuries. How many of you really, really need a vacation? I'm sure the majority of you do, whether or not you realize it. Well I, for one, fell into that "needing a vacation" category.

My vacation was not really planned well, and it showed. The rigors of work (yes, we at NYRWA do have a few rigors, well...very few) had gotten to me, and it was time for a break. It was the end of August and the weather was beautiful. Just the thought made me relax, that is, until I told my wife. Yep, as you might have guessed it, the ol' honey do list came flying right out. Since I didn't allow her much notice, the list was short...only 29 items!!! Just so you know, I completed 34 items, but there were still 29 left when my vacation ended. Does that sound familiar or what? I think my wife informed me it was the new math.

Being the eternal optimist I am, I didn't let the list get me down. As I stated, the weather was beautiful, so the list pretty much completed itself. Well, that's not quite true, but I told my 17 year old son that, as I handed him the list each morning! Ah, life was good, warm weather, no stress, what more could a balding, overweight Training Specialist want? I should add that it was very relaxing to watch my son work, and then take the credit for it when my wife came home. My son wants a car, so his silence went a long way! I must admit, there were 2 days in particular that it felt like I didn't even have a job (Psst...don't tell Pat).

Like most good things, my vacation had to come to an end. I have caught myself reflecting on my vacation, and how relaxing a time it was. It really allowed me to

get re-energized, and focused on the tasks at hand.

The point of this article is simple. Your well being is crucial to the success of your water and/or wastewater system. Employees who are tired or stressed out, tend to make simple mistakes, cause injuries, and be short tempered with fellow employees and customers. Each of these examples can be just as harmful to a system as a lack of maintenance. Make sure you take care of yourself, as well as, care for your system. Remember, as operators', most people don't appreciate what you do, but without realizing it, they depend upon each of you for the well being of their entire family, 24/7/365...no questions asked. And just that responsibility alone entitles you to a little time off once in a while.

I hope you all enjoy another safe and productive New York Winter. ♠

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