

RESOURCES: By Richard Winters
NYRWA Circuit Rider 1

As a new Circuit Rider with the New York Rural Water Association, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am 45 years old and was born and raised in the Sullivan County Town of Liberty, where I attended and graduated from the Liberty Central School System. I was previously employed by the Village of Liberty Water Department, where I worked as a water maintenance worker and progressed to the position of a IIA Water Treatment Plant Operator and Class D Water Distribution operator. I was later promoted to the position of Working Supervisor of the department. I'm married to Lynn Winters. We have two children, Richard Jr., a maintenance employee with the New York State Department of Corrections and Christopher, a second-year student at Indian River Community College, Port St. Lucie, Florida, where he is studying for a degree in Architectural Design and Building Construction.

Following my appointment as a Circuit Rider, I have become aware of the many resources that are available in assisting our community water systems throughout New York State.

Included in the many resources, are programs like the State Revolving Funds, Rural Development Loans and Grants programs for financial assistance, the availability of technical aid through various engineering firms, computer software programs, the State Department of Health, the State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and various internet web sites.

One of the resources not mentioned above, but one that is vitally important to our industry, is the knowledge and experience offered to us by plant operators and other water department employees. We must all remember that when all the modern technology fails, be it by power or mechanical failure, it is the human resources that find solutions to these problems.

Many of the systems I have visited experience financial difficulties and I have come across examples of how the use of human resources have helped in the reduction of costs. The types of jobs performed by these individuals were not always what you would find listed in their job descriptions. Listed below are just a few examples:

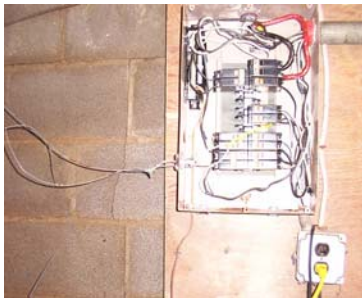
Construction of a roof over an open reservoir with the work performed by municipal water department employees (not outside contractors).



- Construction of a new spillway by municipal water department employees (not outside contractors).



- Ingenuity on the part of a system operator to devise a \$15 emergency pump switch shut-off device using two Clorox bottles, some old PVC pipe he had laying around and some cable cut to the length that would only allow the storage tank to reach a pre-determined level. The partially filled Clorox bottles would sink as the tank emptied taking the slack out of the cable to the point where it would shut off the breaker in the electrical panel box. (The device actually works and has already saved the system about \$800 in pump replacement costs).



Please understand that I don't mean they can ever replace the professionals in these fields, however, in some situations these employees are able to get the job done. We should also remember that the people doing the job every day have usually the best answers to problems encountered and tap this resource whenever possible. Modern technology certainly has its important place in our industry, but we should always remember the vital role our human resources play. Human resources, unlike mechanical resources, are always flexible to the ever changing demands of this industry.

I'm looking forward to visiting many more professionals in this field, seeing more examples of their commitment to this industry, and becoming a better help to all of you by sharing the knowledge I receive with each visit I make.