

ARRA Circuit Riders: Introduction

(American Reinvestment and Recovery Act)

by Liz Tedford and Geroge VonPless

Hi everyone! We are the new kids on the block, or better yet, the new riders on the “circuit”. So, introductions are in order for those of you who have not already found one of us knocking on your door. (More soon will!) We are: Liz Tedford from Saranac, NY, in the wonderful Adirondack Mountains, and George Von Pless from Kirkville, NY.

Liz comes to NYRWA with a regulatory background as a former Health Inspector with the Clinton County Health Department, serving primarily in the “Water Program”. As well as other Health Inspector duties, including system inspections, she had oversight of water operator certifications for the County and organized training for water and wastewater personnel in the surrounding areas.

George comes to NYRWA with an administrative and financial background as the former Multi-Family Housing Program Director for New York State with USDA Rural Development in Syracuse, NY. George also served as a District Director and Project Manager for Rural Development, with oversight of numerous RD programs, offices and staff.

The purpose of the Circuit Rider Program in general is to protect the nation’s, and New York State’s, multi-billion dollar investment in rural and small municipal water and wastewater utility systems by providing on-site technical assistance that assures cost effective operations and adequate income for operations and appropriate debt service.

The primary duty of the ARRA Circuit Riders is to work with water and wastewater utility systems, and Rural Development offices, to assist in the RUS Loan and Grant application process. Our focus is to assist systems that have projects on the RUS backlog list, work with systems with issues/consent orders from the regulatory agencies, and to recruit and assist potential loan/grant applicants in moving their projects forward in the funding stages.

Between our starting date of June 12th, 2009, and October 31, 2010, the two of us will have completed a MINIMUM of 350 on-site contacts with water and wastewater systems around the State, as well as numerous visits with RD offices and regional regulator agency offices. We also had a wonderful opportunity to meet our counterpart ARRA Circuit Riders from across the country

at a recent training session in Oklahoma City. The general consensus is that this ARRA money will be spent, and we at New York Rural Water want to see it spent HERE, in our rural NY communities, where a true need exists. We understand that for small communities the application process and associated required documentation can be somewhat daunting, but that’s what we are here for, to help y’all out!

So feel free to contact either of us, Liz or George, (dependent upon your location) if you are interested or have projects you have been considering. Liz targets communities from Jefferson County down to Sullivan and all of the eastern counties. George generally targets communities from Oswego County down to Broome and all of the counties west of Interstate 81. This is a great opportunity that won’t last long, so consider your projects and take advantage of our services. If you don’t happen to find one of us knocking on your door, we can be reached at the NYRWA offices at 518-828-3155 (Liz ext 19-George Ext 23) or through email: Liz Tedford (tedford@nyruralwater.org) and George VonPless (vonpless@nyruralwater.org) We look forward to working with you! 💧