



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Florence Braunius | NYRWA President

Here it is, October 4 as I write this article for the Winter 2010 issue of *Aquafacts*. I am just back from the National Rural Water's Water Pro Conference that was held in New Orleans, LA, this past week. I would like to thank the National Rural Water Association Board and Staff for an exceptional conference. The event was well managed, the sessions were informative, and the format appeared to work very well for all participants.

And might I add a special thanks to the people of New Orleans for their warm welcome. We received excellent, courteous service everywhere we visited, making for a very enjoyable experience for my first time in the Crescent City. All those things you've heard about New Orleans being one of the best places to find great food, they are all true. I can't wait to go back!

President Fred Sheldon has completed his two year tenure and the very capable Mr. Joe Liles from Kentucky is now President of National Rural Water. We look to the future for National Rural Water Association with confidence, knowing that good leadership working in conjunction with a knowledgeable and very capable staff will continue to meet the challenges on the national level.

The NYRWA received 3 awards at the National Rural Water Association's *Tribute to Excellence* awards ceremony, held on September 27. The awards were for: Member Services Merit Award for 2010, National Legislation Excellence Award of Merit 2010, and the State Legislation Excellence Award of Merit 2010. Well deserved and congratulations to all the staff who contribute so much to this organization.

I did find time to attend some training sessions at the conference. Two sessions were especially helpful to me as an operator. Carl Brown presented an excellent session on "Getting Great Rates". I think most water and sewer utilities struggle with how to find the right rate for their system. Knowing what needs to be covered by these rates, we all wonder where the money will come from. Carl gave some great ideas on how and where to get started. Bill Jarocki presented the EFC's Financial Dashboard's approach to rates as well. (Some of you may remember Mr. Jarocki from his presentation at our NY Conference a few years ago.) The approach is based on having the capability to sustain your systems, and was developed at the Environmental Finance Center at Boise State in Idaho. Websites are www.carlbrownconsulting.com and www.boisestate.edu for more information. New York

Rural Water Association has a section on their forum page for further discussion of these issues as well.

Our Association's forum section on our web page is having an impact on water and sewer systems within our state and beyond. It was just this week that I received an email, followed by a phone call from an engineering firm in Vermont with questions regarding our drying beds here in Speculator. She had seen the comments on our forum with regard to our biosolids handling and contacted me through an email. This is precisely the service we had hoped for with this addition to our website. Let's just say it is the answer to "inquiring minds want to know" for water and sewer. It is truly a place to share your knowledge and ask your questions.

Another session I attended focused on five separate State Rural Water Associations and the programs that each association developed which had direct benefits to their member systems. Vermont Rural Water Association spoke about their WARN system, just as we have here in NY. It is a "mutual aid" system for water and wastewater utilities. If you are not a member in the NYWARN Program, you may want to look into it. Vermont takes the approach that it doesn't always mean it is an emergency situation, sometimes you may need a particular part or repair item that you could get from a neighboring system and replace when your order comes in. I think most of us work this way, but by participating in WARN, it validates the agreement, just in case anyone has questions. Florida Rural Water Association presented their development of a pharmaceutical collection event. This was very successful in Florida, and there may be an opportunity for NYRWA to play a role in this in our own state.

Next year, the 2011 National Conference will be back in Louisville, Kentucky, in conjunction with the Utility Expo. Having attended this event in Louisville in 2009, I can say, I am looking forward to returning. I would encourage everyone to be looking for the announcement when it arrives next summer, and if at all possible, give some consideration to attending. Maybe you will be the winner of the Meredith H. Thompson Award at our NYRWA Conference in Saratoga!

In closing, I wish you all the very best for the holiday season, stay warm, stay safe, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. 💧💧