

# 2021: A SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR NYRWA

By Jamie Herman

So, another year has passed, and I'm sure 2021 is a year that many of us will not soon forget. The past year brought many challenges, hurdles we couldn't have imagined even two years ago. For many of you, it likely impacted you family, friends and loved ones. Without a doubt, it was a year of modified plans and goals. However, here at NYRWA, 2021 also brought us a year of increased opportunity, growth, and the ability to better serve you, our valued membership.

In February 2021, we were awarded a contract with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to provide non-regulatory technical assistance and training to wastewater systems in the Lake Champlain and Chesapeake Bay Watersheds, specifically with nutrient reduction and operator technical assistance. We currently have two staff who are providing this assistance. Craig Catalano serves the Lake Champlain area and Kevin Maine serves the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. We look forward to assisting those systems in the coming years.

June 2021, brought the return of our USDA, Rural Development funded Wastewater Technician 2 through a sub agreement with the National Rural Water Association (NRWA). This position allows our staff to split the state east and west at NY Route 81. Steve Grimm, Wastewater Technician 1, serves the eastern portion of the state, while Brandon Crompt, Wastewater Technician 2, serves the western region.

During July 2021, NRWA again awarded NYRWA with a full-time EPA funded Water Training Specialist. Carrie Bolton, formerly with the Village of Fair Haven, has stepped into this role and is working to provide more one-day training in the future and is also providing on-site technical assistance in all areas of water system operation and management. Primarily, Carrie is focused on compliance issues such as Emergency Response Plans, Vulnerability Assessments, Cyber-Security Assessments, Standard Operating Procedures and Asset Management Plans. Carrie has been very successful at assisting systems with compliance related issues in her short time here, we hope you will reach out if the need arises.

Once again, in December 2021, NRWA awarded us with an EPA funded Wastewater Training Specialist. By the time you read this article, Dave Stenzel will bring his 27 years of water & wastewater experience to fill this role. This program again should allow NYRWA to provide more classroom training for recertification purposes here in 2022. We are grateful for all the opportunities afforded to NYRWA in 2021, we look forward to delivering on these programs and providing more efficient service to our members in the years to come.

2021 also brought our Rural Water Family a true blessing. Jackie O'Connell, the wife of Board Director and NRWA Executive Vice-President, John O'Connell, showed her strength and fought a courageous health battle and a successful surgery. Jackie has a long recovery ahead but she is doing very well and getting stronger each and every day.

As you can tell, 2021 was a busy year for your association. We look forward to more successes in 2022! First, we are in full planning mode for the 43rd Annual Technical Training Workshop and Exhibition to be held May 23-25, 2022, at the Turning Stone Resort and Conference Center in Verona. Please mark your calendars for this event, we look forward to seeing you again as we enjoy the largest industry event in NYS. We are very aware of the challenges and are making contingency plans for social distancing and masking, if necessary, we will never overlook the health and safety of our employees and members, but we believe 2022 will be the year to return to the conference setting.

In 2022, we look forward to watching John O'Connell be elected and assume the role of President of the National Rural Water Board of Directors. This transition will occur in September 2022 in National Harbor, Maryland. John has dedicated more than two decades to serving on both the NYRWA Board of Directors and the NRWA Board of Directors. His time, commitment and dedication has shown through, and we look forward to seeing the association continue to succeed and grow during John's term as President. NYRWA would also like to thank current NRWA President, David Baird, from the great state of Delaware, for his excellent leadership during these very difficult past two years. Thank you, President Baird!

2021 was a success for NYRWA because of you, our system and associate members. In 2022 we will deliver these services to our members; you can count on that. Our dedicated team is planning and preparing for the year ahead, more classroom training (it may include socially distanced seating), new avenues for technical assistance, and with even a little bit of luck we can gather and enjoy our time together in Verona!

There are many exciting potential new opportunities to add member benefits here in 2022 which are still in the works. We look forward to sharing these opportunities with our members in the coming months. Last, I would like to congratulate Ernie Prievo on his retirement from the West Carthage Joint Water System. Ernie has been a friend to so very many of us, a leader in our industry, thank you my friend. We wish you much happiness and good health in retirement! Until we meet again, be safe and well, and continue to provide....Quality On Tap! 💧💧💧



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