



CIRCUS RIDER

Jonathon Barnes | Water and Wastewater Trainer

WOW! Come one come all! Get your tickets here! What a year this has been. From each wastewater plant to each water utility that I have been blessed to reach, each municipality has had to go through great and unexpected efforts in making sure their plants are coordinating with everyone and their schedules. This includes the board members, clerks, operators, laborers, and yes, even part time summer help. We have all had to drastically adjust our everyday routines into what is the safest way to handle these new situations due to a pandemic. Including our health, the safety of our communities, budgets, operations, and assistance. If you find yourself in this category, I welcome you to the circus!

The circus is a place to see amazing things happen that you do not normally get to see or do during a casual day! Or a place where sometimes something very tragic happens to all our dismay. Minus the cotton candy and the fried dough, within this last year I have witnessed some interesting things happen throughout our state. In some cases, clowns have escaped and I'm pretty sure are now collecting balloons in some of the manholes. In other cases, the ringleader has been put in a cage and is being circled by lions with just a matter of time. While others are upgrading their big top to include UV or membrane filtration with a whole new animal ride. So, as a Circus Rider, I have seen many shows that we are all unaccustomed to this year. Water quality improved in many systems because operators were focused solely on improvements and quality. Some operators became very knowledgeable and close with their treatment due to spending ample hours where they otherwise would not, so they would not be put at risk. I have watched as some D.P.W. crews became astute in their abilities and knowledge for the benefit of the community and their personnel. Some have grown closer as a group and work better together because of it. I have also watched as some crews fall behind because one or more employees are home quarantined, where then others must step in and cover their schedule, leaving them even farther behind in other duties. There were other operators who rose to the challenge that they never thought they would see themselves in. Taking the leap from one trapeze to the next, sometimes with no safety net. In my passes, some entities pulled together and have the full support of their communities and have achieved so much more than just work. The weekends have become lost and the weekdays have run into a class all of their own..."2020". Everywhere I went it was not "it's finally spring" or "it's summertime". It was welcome to "2020"

with an ominous tone of unknown for everyone. No one knew what to expect and the "Big Top" holds another very big similarity to our community. The circus is a Family. They rely on each other for everything from meals, wheels, paint and help. They build it up and tear it down together. All while knowing the show **MUST** go on!

Throughout the months of circus acts following the closing of our communities, we have all been chosen as the biggest part of an essential structure that is necessary for our communities' wellbeing and livelihood. The schools, restaurants, hardware stores, residential customers, manors, hotels, fueling stations, grocery and the factories all rely on us to do our part, to the best of our ability and to provide the necessities to continue Life. I hope you all find some solace as an operator, without all of you, life cannot continue as we are accustomed. Instead, the circus falls apart, the tent falls and the heathens and animals take over. It is a time to come together as a family and check on each other in what is destined to be a better year in 2021! 💧💧