



OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Keith Davie

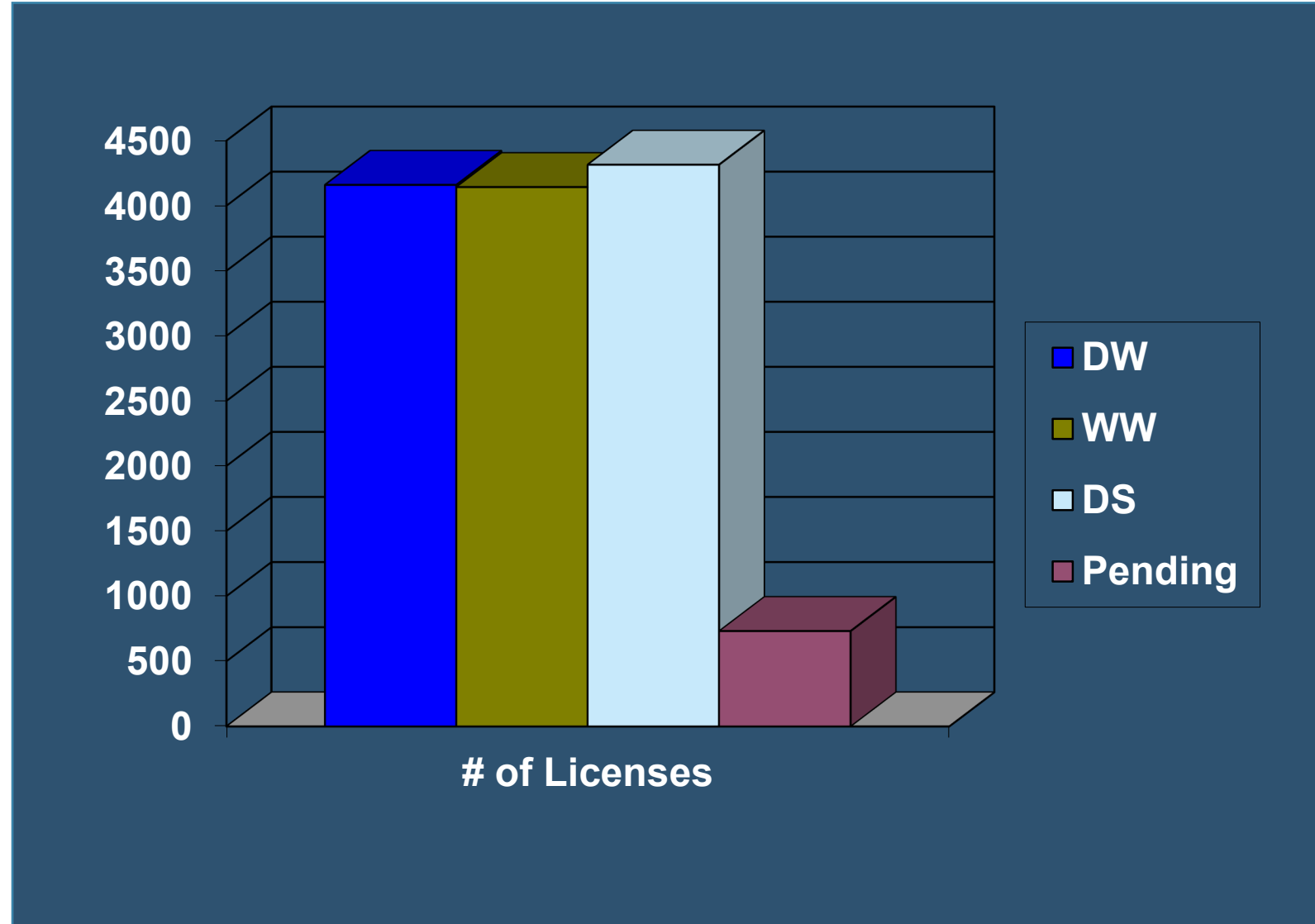
Division of Water Resource Management / Operator Certification Program
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Focus on Change | 2024



LICENSE NUMBERS (ACTIVE)

- 4,160 drinking water (DW) treatment plant operators.
- 4,143 wastewater (WW) treatment plant operators.
- 4,315 water distribution (DW) system operators.
- Total: 12,618 operators.
- 701 awaiting licensure.





PASS PERCENTAGES

Overall Exam Pass % January– December 2023

Drinking Water		Wastewater		Distribution
31%	A	52%	1	63%
49%	B	46%	2	72%
51%	C	53%	3	74%
70%	D	67%	4	N/A



2023 TOP EXAM PERFORMERS

DRINKING WATER

DWA	Robert Lopez – 90%
DWB	Carlos Prestamo-Gayon – 96%
DWC	Peter Hubscher – 95% David Kinchen – 95%
DWD	Anthony Annibali – 92%

DISTRIBUTION

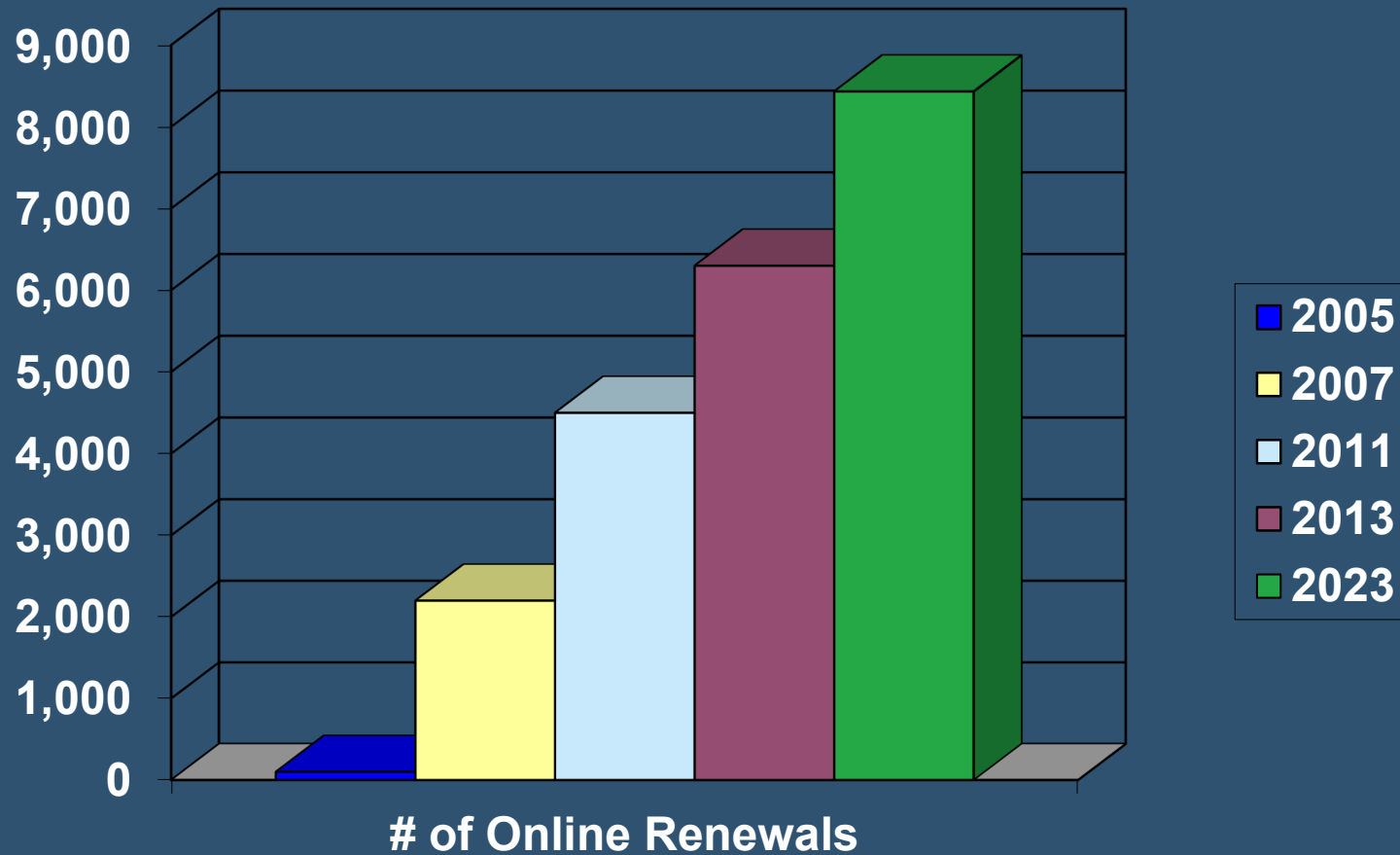
DS1	Anthony Spinner – 94%
DS2	Adam Swanson – 96%
DS3	Jason Aills – 100% Barry Lucibello – 100%
DS4	N/A

WASTEWATER

WWA	Daniel Niemann – 90% Christen Wood – 90%
WWB	Andrew Hartley – 98%
WWC	Erica Atkinson – 95%
WWD	Jason Hall – 90%



NUMBER OF ONLINE RENEWALS



- The growth of online renewals.
 - 2005 = 0 online renewals.
 - 2009 = 2,200 online renewals.
 - 2011 = 4,500 online renewals.
 - 2013 = 6,300 online renewals.
 - 2023 = 8,432 online renewals.



RECENT UPDATES

- DEP's paperless initiative is moving forward.
 - Electronic issued licenses are being developed and anticipated for early 2025.
 - Issued certificates are anticipated to follow.
- A new look to PSI's candidate scheduling for exams on the website, but it's the same process.
- California State University at Sacramento (CSUS) created a Volume III of the Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants.
 - This volume is divided into two DEP approved enrollments (Enrollments A and B).
 - Volume III is designed to replace Advance Treatment enrollment.
 - The Advance Treatment enrollments will continue to be accepted by DEP until it becomes obsolete by CSUS.
 - This applies *only* to CSUS, not to any current approved coursework through other providers.



PLANS CREATE PATHWAYS

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Program Updates



PLANS CREATE PATHWAYS

- What did you want to be when you grew up?
 - Fireman.
 - Law enforcement.
 - Professional football/baseball player.
 - Not what I am doing now.
- Plans and pathways get us where we need to go.
- Resources can assist us in our journey.
 - Education.
 - Experience.
 - Technology.



PLANS CREATE PATHWAYS (2)

- “Plan” = a method for achieving an end or a customary method of doing something.
- Synonyms: goal, dream, intention or objective.
- Plans are usually designed using our perspective, so we can get where we **want** to go.
- Goal > how we see it > end.
 - I am hungry > I am hungry now > fast food drive-thru.
 - Instant gratification.
- I need to study for my exam > what should I do > pass the exam.
 - Ask co-workers who have already taken the test for answers.
 - Keep retaking the exam over and over.
 - Only study the question and answer at the end of the book.



PLANS CREATE PATHWAYS (3)

- “Pathway” = the sequence of traditional reactions that causes one substance to covert into another or a process that occurs (traveled) over time will produce desired destinations.
- Synonyms: process, footpath, track or trace.
- Usually, pathways are created from the most traveled methods, which does not always lead to where we **need** to go.
- Remember our plans.
 - Goal > how we see it > end.
 - I am hungry > I am hungry now > fast food drive-thru.
 - Instant gratification.
- Pathways take time to develop.
 - Goal > take time > end.
 - I am hungry > I can be patient > cooking a pot roast in the crockpot.



PLANS CREATE PATHWAYS (4)

- There is a difference between where we **want** to go and where we **need** to go.
- Plans that include the collective needs can create pathways that are for all.
 - Including operators, facilities, family members, Florida citizens and tourists.
 - Is your Global Positioning System (GPS) set to your wants or needs?



PLANS CREATE PATHWAYS (5)

- **Collective oriented plans create successful pathways!**
 - Better experienced operators.
 - Higher qualified operators.
 - Improved licensure process and regulations.
- **Wolfpack mindset.**
 - Travel in sections.
 - Collective group effort.



RECIPROCITY

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RECIPROACITY

- Reciprocity is called by many names.
 - House Bill (HB) 23.
 - Senate Bill (SB) 162, Chapter 2023-204, Laws of Florida.
 - Section 403.8721, Florida Statutes (F.S.).
- Effective July 1, 2023.
- Who is affected by reciprocity?
 - Licensed drinking water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant as well as licensed water distribution system operators.
 - Out-of-state and Florida operators.
 - Florida citizens.
 - Tourists.
 - Operator's families.



RECIPROcity (2)

- The law requires DEP to adopt rules to implement licensure by reciprocity and develop an evaluation process which includes licensed water treatment plant operators, water distribution system operators, or domestic wastewater treatment plant operators from another state, federal government, territory or tribal government, and for individuals serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- It also allows DEP to issue temporary licenses to non-Florida licensed operators during a declared state of emergency.



RECIPROcity (3)

- Legislative charge to DEP.
- Develop a process for the following.
 - State-to-state.
 - Military.
 - Temporary licenses during Florida declared emergencies.
- Essential first responders.
 - Identified within section 403.865, F.S.
 - DEP may potentially incorporate the title on future issued licenses.



RECIPROCITY (4)

- State-to-state licensure comparison.
 - Compare out-of-state licensure requirements to Florida's licensure requirements.
 - Subject to DEP approval.
 - Other states are different (example: qualifying experience).
- Items considered during review include the following.
 - Coursework.
 - Education.
 - Training.
 - Exams.
 - Experience.
- Other associated items of consideration include disciplinary actions, application development and setting of application fees.



RECIPROcity (5)

- U.S. Armed Forces.
 - Compare duties of applicants while serving in the in the U.S. Armed Forces to Florida's licensure requirements.
 - DEP recognizes the different branches within the U.S. Armed Forces.
 - Subject to DEP approval.
- Items considered during review include the following.
 - Education.
 - Operational experience.
 - Exams.
 - Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).
- Other associated items of consideration include disciplinary actions, application development and setting application fees.



RECIPROcity (6)

- Temporary licenses.
 - Compare out-of-state licensure requirements to Florida's licensure requirements.
 - Subject to DEP approval.
 - Applicable during a Florida declared state of emergency.
- Items considered during review include the following.
 - Same requirements as state-to-state.
 - OR**
 - Same requirements as U.S. Armed Forces.
- Other associated items of consideration include disciplinary actions and application process.
- No application fees.



RECIPROCITY (7)

- Key take-away.
 - The goal is to utilize collective plans to create a process or pathway for potential licensed operators that can enhance the effectiveness of the profession in Florida.
- DEP is charged with creating a process (pathway) for this to occur.



RECIPROcity (8)

- What we have done so far.
 - Hired new staff.
 - Internal coordination.
 - Notice of Rule Development (NORD) for Chapter 62-602, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), was published on Nov. 1, 2023.
 - Developing interim guidance until the rule becomes effective.
 - Researching on operator requirements in other states.



RECIPROCITY (9)

- Pathway moving forward: DEP's next steps.
 - Continue research on other states' requirements.
 - Coordinate with industry to seek stakeholder input.
 - Draft proposed rule language.
 - Conduct a public workshop at which additional input will be gathered from stakeholders and members of the public.
 - Publish a Notice of Proposed Rule (NOPR).
- No set timeframe; still in the early stages of implementation.



RECIPROcity (10)

- Plans will create a full circle effect for new pathways.
- Plans will develop into electronic pathways.
 - Electronic licenses.
 - Electronic application submissions.
 - Electronic DEP responses.
 - Electronic interaction between DEP and operators.
- Numerous benefits to electronic pathways.
 - QR Codes enable **instant access**.
 - **Simplifies** the application process.
 - **Decreases** DEP response time.
 - Improves the ability for **OCP to address operator's needs** including renewals, queries, updates and processing applications.



THANK YOU

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