MRWA 46th Annual Conference and Trade Show
SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8th

6:00 – 7:30 P.M. – KEYNOTE SESSION

AI is Coming to Maine: What Data Centers Mean for Water and Wastewater
Michael Duguay, Commissioner, Department of Economic & Community Development; Melanie Loyzim, Commissioner, Maine Department of Environmental Protection; Patrick Scully, Acting Chair, Maine PUC; Heather Sanborn, Maine Public Advocate
(W/WW/VSWS/Admin)

As interest in data center development grows in Maine, what could these projects mean for the state's water and wastewater utilities? This panel discussion will explore the opportunities and challenges associated with data center development, including water supply and wastewater capacity, infrastructure investment, regulatory and environmental considerations, and potential impacts on existing ratepayers. Bringing together multiple perspectives, panelists will discuss the important questions utilities and communities should be asking as they balance economic development opportunities with long-term infrastructure planning and the needs of the customers they serve.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9th

8:00 – 9:30 A.M. – SESSION 1

I & I: The Sneaky Thief
Loyd Rawlings, USA BlueBook
(W/WW)

Inflow and infiltration (I&I) silently steal capacity, increase treatment costs, and places unnecessary stress on collection and treatment systems. This session explores the impacts of I&I from the operator, supervisor, and community perspective while providing practical methods for identifying, quantifying, and reducing unwanted flow through field investigations, flow analysis, and proven troubleshooting techniques.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9th

8:00 – 9:00 A.M. – SESSION 1, continued

CertTracker Licensing Portal 101

Mackenzie Bardelli, Maine DWP
(W/VSWS/Admin)

Become familiar with Maine's new Water Operator Portal in this practical, step-by-step session. Participants will be guided through the process of accessing their operator profile, navigating the portal, and understanding its features and functions. The presentation will include a live demonstration designed to help operators feel more confident using the system and managing their information. Time will also be reserved for questions and troubleshooting common issues.

MEWARN & Emergency Planning

Matt Demers, Maine Rural Water Association
(W/WW)

Effective emergency response begins with planning, preparation, and strong partnerships. This session will introduce the Maine Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (MEWARN) and explain how mutual aid can support water and wastewater utilities during emergencies. Participants will learn how to become a MEWARN member, activate the network, and incorporate mutual aid agreements into their Emergency Response Plans. The presentation will also cover developing incident-specific response plans, establishing relationships with neighboring utilities before an emergency occurs, and coordinating resources using the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS). Additional topics include interlocal agreements, resource coordination, and tracking emergency response expenses to support effective incident management and recovery.

You've Been Awarded SRF Funding. Now What?

Eduard Chenette, Maine DWP; Brandy King, Maine DEP
(W/WW/Admin)

Receiving State Revolving Fund (SRF) funding is an exciting step toward completing important water and wastewater infrastructure improvements, but what happens next? Representatives from the Maine Drinking Water Program and Maine Department of Environmental Protection will walk participants through the next steps following an SRF funding award. This session will cover key requirements, documentation, project timelines, and responsibilities associated with the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Fund programs. Attendees will gain a better understanding of how to navigate the funding process, avoid common challenges, and keep their projects moving forward.

***8:00 – 9:00 A.M.* – SESSION 1, continued**

Learn from the Mistakes of Others

Peter Lowe, Brann & Isaacson
(W/Admin/WW Mgmt)

Peter will share practical examples of common missteps by management that have created liability to employee lawsuits and government enforcement. The session will provide best practice tips for addressing issues related to hiring, performance management, managing medical and leave issues, discipline, wage, and hour compliance and terminations. Peter will share his management Pet Peeves with the goal of keeping your organization out of trouble.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10th

***9:10 – 10:10 A.M.* – SESSION 2**

What Your Lab Results are Trying to Tell You

Loyd Rawlings, USABlueBook
(W/WWVSWS)

Most operators use lab results to determine compliance. Great operators use them to identify trends and spot problems before they become emergencies. This practical, highly visual session teaches attendees how to recognize early warning signs, connect data with field observations, and use trends to support better operational decisions.

Backflow Prevention in Practice: From Hazard Identification to Compliance

Nolan Johnson, Paul Whittemore, New England Backflow
(W/WW)

Cross-connections and backflow incidents can pose serious risks to drinking water quality, making effective prevention and control essential for every public water system. This session will explore common cross-connection hazards, the causes of backpressure and backsiphonage, and the methods and devices used to prevent contamination, including the appropriate level of protection for different hazards. Participants will also learn about the key elements of an effective cross-connection control program, including inspections, testing and certification, recordkeeping, customer communication, and responding to potential backflow hazards.



***9:10 – 10:10 A.M.* – SESSION 2, continued…**

Beyond the Pump: Chemical Feed System Design, Troubleshooting, & Security

Danny Smith, TiSales
(W/WW/VSWS)

Proper installation, operation, and troubleshooting of chemical feed systems are essential for maintaining reliable water and wastewater treatment processes. This session will examine common piping and installation mistakes, proper system layout, and the functions of critical components, including check valves, pressure relief valves, and backpressure valves. Participants will learn practical approaches to diagnosing chemical feed and pumping problems, following the system from the chemical storage tank through the injection point. The presentation will also address cybersecurity concerns associated with SCADA systems and remote access, highlighting potential vulnerabilities and considerations for protecting chemical feed operations. Attendees will gain valuable insight into improving system performance, identifying common failures, and maintaining safe, reliable chemical feed operations.

What the Numbers Tell Us: Financial Trends, Challenges, & Ways to Overcome Them

Jeremy McDaniel, Maine Municipal Bond Bank
(W/WW/Admin)

This session will discuss audited Financial Statements and Metrics, Revenue and Expense Trends, Debt Service Coverage Ratio, Rate Increases, and The Cost of Doing Nothing (delayed rate increase, declining financial capacity, difficult financing). Understanding your utility's financial health is essential for making informed decisions and planning for the future.

From Operator Knowledge to Living Capital Plan

Chris Dwinal, Wright-Pierce
(W/WW)

Every operator knows where most system problems are, but that knowledge is not always captured in a way that supports prioritization of future capital projects and the funding to support those projects. This presentation will explore how maintenance records, mapping, field observations, and operator experience can be transformed into an asset inventory and capital improvement program that helps utilities plan ahead, justify investments, and compete for funding. Attendees will learn practical approaches for documenting system assets, identifying priorities, and working with engineers and their own staff to develop a flexible roadmap for maintaining and improving their wastewater systems.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9th

10:20 – 11:20 A.M. – SESSION 3

Attracting & Retaining Top Talent in 2027: What Makes Your Utility Different

David, Cuillo, Career Management Associates
(W/Admin/WW Mgmt)

Attracting and retaining good employees is challenging, especially with limited budgets, an aging workforce, and increasing competition for talent. What makes your water district an employer of choice? This interactive session explores practical strategies to retain valued employees, prepare for retirements, and attract qualified candidates beyond compensation. Participants will discover how effective leadership, employee engagement, recognition, benefits, and workplace culture can strengthen retention and recruiting, while gaining simple, actionable ideas they can put to work immediately in their districts.

Everyday Dilemmas: Real-World Ethical Scenarios for Small System Operators

Mackenzie Bardelli, Maine DWP
(W/VSWS/Admin/WW Mgmt)

Have you ever found yourself in a somewhat sticky situation as an operator of public water or wastewater system? Maybe your equipment is held together by shoestrings and duct tape, but no funds have been made available to replace it. Or you were asked to sign a report when you know the data it contains is questionable. It seems like every professional finds themselves in situations where their ethics and resiliency are tested. Join the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program for a session that digs into operator ethics and ways to troubleshoot these sensitive situations.

Ampherometric Sensor Technology: Considerations in Selection & Installation

Matthew Brunetti, Tensile Water
(W/WW/VSWS)

Chlorine measurement is critical to maintaining safe, high-quality drinking water. This seminar examines the role of amperometric sensors. Ranging from bare-electrode and reagent-feed designs to membrane-style and in-pipe multi-parameter designs in municipal water systems. The session will cover the operating principles of amperometric sensors, factors that influence accuracy (pH, temperature, conductivity), and practical guidance on calibration and membrane maintenance. Attendees will learn how these sensors compare with traditional colorimetric DPD analyzers, and what to consider when making a transition. Discussion will also highlight installation strategies, maintenance options (including self-cleaning designs), waste stream

10:20 – 11:20 A.M. – SESSION 3, continued…

considerations, and compliance reporting under EPA Method 334.0. New advancements in amperometric technology and best practices for distribution system monitoring will be shared. This seminar is designed for professionals seeking a clear, practical understanding of how to select, install, and operate amperometric sensors to achieve reliable chlorine residual monitoring and regulatory compliance.

From Data to Decisions: Putting SCADA to Work in Water & Wastewater Operations

Bill Snyder, Mission Communications
(W/WW/Admin)

SCADA, while very common today, is not always fully utilized or understood. This presentation will provide a practical working knowledge of SCADA Systems that will allow operators and engineers to better evaluate what is currently in place, what is needed, and make more informed decisions on SCADA investments. Energy efficiency is a significant cost of operating a facility and we will demonstrate how SCADA Data can support assessments by translating data to actionable insights.

Real Time Microbiological Insights Through Computer Vision: Advancing Operator Decision Making & Knowledge Retention in Wastewater Treatment

Caleb Van Geffen, Nyad AI
(WW)

Wastewater operators know that the true heartbeat of any treatment plant is its biology. The delicate balance of floc-forming bacteria, filamentous organisms, and higher-life forms determines settling performance, nutrient removal, energy use, and regulatory compliance. Yet traditional microscopy remains slow, subjective, and often available only after problems have escalated. This 60-minute session explores how advanced computer vision and machine learning can deliver timely, objective microbiological insights directly on the plant floor. Operators simply capture images of routine microscopy slides and receive rapid identification and quantification of key bio-indicators, assessment of floc health and settling risk, and plain-English interpretations that link biological signals to chemical and operational data.
By the end of this session, attendees will be able to: (1) Explain how computer vision provides real-time microbiological analysis and its advantages over traditional microscopy; (2) Identify key bio-indicators and interpret their shifts to support proactive process adjustments; (3) Apply practical strategies for integrating biological insights with chemical and operational data to optimize treatment performance; and (4) Recognize effective approaches for capturing and preserving institutional knowledge across shifts and workforce transitions.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9th

12:40 – 1:40 P.M. – SESSION 4

We Did it Ourselves. Operator Led Upgrades that Save Money

Nick Rico, Wells Sanitary District
(W/WW/VSWS)

Utility operators often know their facilities better than anyone, and sometimes the right crew can successfully complete projects that might otherwise require a traditional design-bid-build approach. This session will highlight real-world examples of pump station upgrades, equipment replacements, and other utility improvements completed in-house. Presenters will discuss the projects they tackled, how they approached the work, challenges encountered along the way, and the skills and resources that made the projects successful. Attendees will see how utilizing operator knowledge and in-house capabilities can reduce project costs (and costs to customers) while improving and maintaining critical infrastructure. The session will also encourage operators to evaluate their own facilities and consider where their crew's experience, creativity, and technical skills may make a do-it-yourself approach practical.

You Have Your Capital Plan. How Do You Support It & Use It?

Chris Cossette, Wiscasset Water District; Dan Wells, Dirigo Engineering
(W/WW/Admin)

Developing a capital improvement plan is an important first step, but putting that plan into action requires financial planning, preparation, and coordination. This session will explore how water and wastewater utilities can use their capital plans to prioritize infrastructure improvements, identify financial needs, and take steps toward securing project funding. The discussion will also address the roles and responsibilities of each throughout the project planning and design process. Participants will gain insight into establishing clear expectations, communicating effectively with engineering professionals, and preparing their utilities to move capital improvement projects from planning toward implementation.

From Sample Bottle to Defensible PFAS Result

Katie Richards, PFAS Laboratories
(W/WW/VSWS)

In this interactive session, we'll follow a drinking water sample from collection through laboratory analysis, using real-world examples to show how sampling and laboratory practices affect the results. Operators will practice reading reporting limits and qualifiers, identifying information the lab needs, and deciding what to ask when a result is unexpected.



12:40 – 1:40 P.M. – SESSION 4, continued…

Understanding the Physical & Cybersecurity Threat Landscape Facing the Water & Wastewater Sector

Alec Davison, WaterISAC
(W/WW/Admin)

In today's heightened threat environment, water and wastewater utilities face an increasing array of physical and cybersecurity threats. To help utilities understand and manage these threats, WaterISAC, the water and wastewater sector's Information Sharing and Analysis Center, is here to help. WaterISAC was created over 20 years ago by the sector's leading national associations, including the NRWA, at the urging of the White House, FBI, and the EPA. The presentation will describe the unique benefits of an organization that focuses on sector resilience from physical, cyber, and climate threats. The discussion will then turn to cybersecurity, highlighting the recent uptick in cyber attacks against the sector, cyber threat actor tactics to help inform mitigation efforts, vulnerabilities of "secure" remote access, and considerations of remote access and manual operation. Next, we will detail the sector's physical security threats, such as insider threats and violent extremists, and end with mitigation recommendations.

Key takeaways include insight into the heightened threat environment facing critical infrastructure, an understanding of the factors driving the increased risk to water utilities. Participants will learn about the cybersecurity threat actors, the tactics they are using to compromise water and wastewater utilities, and how to defend against them. In addition, the presentation will discuss physical security threats targeting water utilities, including insider threats and how to manage the risk from these actors. Lastly, participants will come away with recommendations for building relationships and networking with water utilities in their communities to help enhance operational resilience.

Why Communication is Harder than it Looks

David Cuillo, Career Management Associates
(W/Admin/WW Mgmt)

Why does communication breakdown even when everyone has good intentions? In this interactive program, participants will explore how assumptions, perceptions, listening habits, and unclear expectations create workplace communication challenges. Through practical discussion and a short, real-world exercise, participants will learn how to choose effective communication methods, improve clarity, and strengthen accountability and follow-through. Participants will leave with practical takeaways and a personal commitment to improving communication, building trust, and working more effectively with others.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 9th

1:50 – 2:50 P.M. – SESSION 5

Where Does it Go? Understanding Current Sludge & Biosolids Management & the Challenges Being Faced

Jeff McBurnie, Casella Resource Solutions
(WW)

Managing wastewater sludge and biosolids continues to present significant challenges for utilities throughout Maine and the region. This session will provide an overview of sludge and biosolids management practices, including current handling, treatment, and disposal methods. Participants will explore the regional state of the industry and the regulatory, environmental, and operational challenges affecting sustainable biosolids management. The presentation will also examine the impacts of limited disposal options, increasing costs, and evolving regulations on wastewater utilities. Attendees will gain insight into the challenges facing the industry and discuss potential solutions and strategies for managing sludge and biosolids responsibly and sustainably into the future.

Leak Detection: Localize, Locate, & Pinpoint

Nicholas Bates, Pat Prescott, E.J. Prescott
(W/WW)

Join Team EJP and the Smart Utility Professionals for a training on water loss and leak detection. Discover how leak locating correlators, loggers, acoustic locators, and accompanying software can help to localize, locate, and pinpoint leaks, ultimately reducing water loss and operating costs for your utility. Q&A will be held at the end of the training.

Under Siege: Why Hackers Target Small Systems (And How to Stop Them)

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kevin Moncrieffe, National Guard; Adam LePrevost, Milo Water District; Jim Leighton, Limestone Water & Sewer District
(W/WW/VSWS/Admin)

Many Public Water Systems (PWSs) operate under a comforting but highly dangerous assumption: we are simply too small for hackers to care about. The reality is quite the opposite. Small systems have become prime targets and not for the reasons you might think. In this eye-opening session, we will reveal the surprising reasons why your utility is in the crosshairs and share gripping stories of local facilities that suddenly found themselves under digital siege. More importantly, we will show you exactly how to defend your plant against these tactics.

1:50 – 2:50 P.M. – SESSION 5, continued…

Audits, Rates, & Operating Losses: Getting Ready for a Major Infrastructure Project

John Simko, Androscoggin Bank; Ron Smith, RHR Smith & Company
(W/WW/Admin)

Major infrastructure projects present significant financial challenges for small water and wastewater districts, particularly those facing outdated audits, years without rate increases, or ongoing operating losses. This session will explore the financial realities utilities must address before pursuing funding for major capital improvements. We will discuss how a utility's financial condition can affect its ability to secure financing, what lenders and funding agencies look for, and steps districts can take to strengthen their financial position. Attendees will gain practical insight into preparing their utilities for major infrastructure investments and navigating the financial challenges that can delay or complicate essential projects.

Maps & Drawings

Loyd Rawlings, USA BlueBook
(W/WW)

Maps, drawings and records are the only way to inventory underground assets. This course looks at mapping and gatebooks, along with the key information they need to contain. It also covers the latest GIS layering technology.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9th

3:00 – 4:00 P.M. – SESSION 6

Not All Butterfly Valves Are the Same: Understanding Double Eccentric Design

Don LeBlanc, DLVEWS, Inc.
(W/WW)

Butterfly valves are commonly used throughout water and wastewater systems, but differences in valve design can have a significant impact on operation, maintenance, and long-term performance. This session will take a closer look at double eccentric butterfly valve design and how the offset disc and shaft configuration differs from traditional concentric butterfly valves. Participants will learn how valve geometry affects seat contact, operating torque, wear, shutoff performance, and service life.



3:00 – 4:00 P.M. – SESSION 6, continued…

The session will also explore common applications, pressure and operating considerations, valve configuration and selection, and factors operators should consider when evaluating butterfly valves for new installations or replacement projects. Examples of AvTek double eccentric butterfly valves will be used to demonstrate design features and practical applications in water and wastewater systems.

DWP Updates

Amy LaChance, Maine DWP
(W/VSWS/Admin)

Amy Lachance, Maine CDC Drinking Water Program Director, will provide updates on current issues important to Public Water Systems. Topics will include a brief overview of the new Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI), an update on the lowered Maximum Contaminant Levels for PFAS and state rule status, a discussion of other new drinking water rules on the horizon, the status of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan and Grant Applications, and other relevant issues.

Steel & Concrete Coatings/Linings for the Water & Wastewater Industry

Rick Goyette, Sherwin Williams
(W/WW)

This presentation provides an overview of coating and lining considerations for both new construction and rehabilitation of water and wastewater infrastructure assets. Key topics include industry-recognized surface preparation standards, as well as typical coating and lining systems used to protect steel and concrete structures in water and wastewater environments. The presentation also highlights newer technology innovations in coatings and linings, with a focused discussion on manhole rehabilitation strategies. In addition, it covers water storage system protection, including an overview of NSF/ANSI 61 compliance and AWWA system considerations relevant to potable water applications.

TRUST is NOT Internal Control: Recognizing, Preventing, & Responding to Financial Fraud

Ron Smith, RHR Smith & Company
(W/Admin/WW Mgmt)

Financial fraud can happen in any organization, including water and wastewater utilities, regardless of size. This session will explore common types of workplace financial fraud, warning signs, and vulnerabilities such as billing irregularities, unauthorized transactions, and misuse of funds. Participants will learn how effective internal controls, financial oversight, and segregation



3:00 – 4:00 P.M. – SESSION 6, continued…

of duties can help protect utility finances, even in smaller organizations with limited staff and resources. The presentation will also address what to do when fraud is suspected, including documenting concerns, reporting potential misconduct, and safeguarding financial records. Attendees will gain practical strategies for reducing fraud risks, strengthening financial accountability, and protecting their utility's financial resources.

SCADA Instrumentation & Control

Loyd Rawlings, USA BlueBook
(W/WW)

This basic overview explores how operators can use SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) systems to make better decisions related to their plant's or system's performance. Course explains how SCADA systems interact with a plant's instrumentation and processes, and provides tips on how to evaluate SCADA systems and hardware.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10th

8:00 – 9:00 A.M. – SESSION 1

Eliminating the Wet Well with Direct In-Line Pumping

Rebecca Turner, Industrial Flow Solutions
(WW)

Universally, submersible pump stations require unclogging and cleaning from a common villain: "flushable" wipes. But there is now a solution with direct inline pumping, which eliminates the root cause of this issue: the wet well. In this presentation, we will share several case studies including one from the city of Austin, Texas where a 23-story, 320-unit high rise building with a grocery store and restaurant experienced pump station faults from clogged submersible pumps 6 times in two months. With each service, the culprit was the same: "flushable" wipes. Their service charges were compounding. Being a residential building, they can't control the materials their occupants flush. Tenants received multiple notifications regarding the issue, but there was no improvement. Building management needed a solution that was robust and maintenance-free and moved from traditional submersible pumps to a new direct inline pumping system.

By removing the wet well and lifting influent directly from the gravity invert, fats, oils, and greases, along with wipes and any other culprits, do not have the opportunity to separate and solidify. Fibrous material is kept in solution, ejecting it as it arrives. Because the influent is also contained, there is no potential for it to become atmospheric, eliminating all concerns for odor

8:00 – 9:00 A.M. – SESSION 1, continued…

and dangerous gases. Also, removing the wet well eliminates well maintenance. There is no collection of grease on basin walls or fear of leaching into the adjacent solid or ground water. Direct in-line pumping is changing the world one wet well at a time.

From Buildup to Better Water Quality: Distribution System Cleaning Methods

Kevin Sullo, Aquasmart, Inc.
(W)

Distribution systems retain decades of tuberculation, scale, and legacy manganese that cannot be resolved by chemistry alone or eliminated instantly. As water age increases, sequestration breaks down, disinfectant demand rises, and biofilms develop within pipe deposits, driving corrosion, water quality instability, and operational risk, especially during treatment transitions. While systems can be cleaned over time, relying on time alone creates uncertainty. This presentation integrates corrosion control treatment, data-driven system management, and targeted distribution cleaning into a coordinated approach designed to stabilize performance, reduce complaints, and accelerate the transition to a clean, reliable distribution system. This session will go over several techniques to establish what is best for the system based on age, pipe material, water source, budget, and staffing.

Navigating the Federal PFAS Rule: Monitoring, Treatment, & Compliance

Jasmine Bouchard, Maine DWP; Courtany Hanley, Maine DWP
(W/WW/Admin)

The Maine Drinking Water Program will go into detail about the upcoming federal PFAS regulations including initial monitoring, ongoing monitoring, public notice requirements, MCL violations, treatment options, funding opportunities, and meeting compliance with the rule.

Real Talk & Red Tape: A Conversation with the PUC

Stephani Morancie, Jody McColman, Christina Bilodeau, Maine PUC
(W/Admin)

Navigating utility regulations can be challenging but understanding your responsibilities and knowing when to engage with the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) can make a significant difference. This panel discussion will explore key regulatory and financial considerations facing Maine's water utilities, including recognizing when a rate adjustment may be necessary and understanding the process for pursuing one. Panelists will discuss the responsibilities of utility trustees and management, common compliance challenges, and procedures for addressing customer complaints. Participants will also gain insight into when and how to work with the Commission to resolve regulatory questions, maintain compliance, and support the long-term financial and operational sustainability of their utilities.

8:00 – 9:00 A.M. – SESSION 1, continued…

You Don't Have to Own It to Protect It: Practical Source Water Protection Strategies

Susan Breau, Ashley Hodge, Maine DWP
(W/Admin)

Protecting drinking water sources doesn't always require owning the surrounding land. This session will explore practical strategies for source water protection through conservation easements, voluntary agreements, landowner relationships, municipal planning, and community partnerships. Participants will learn how to identify potential threats to public wells, evaluate proposed land-use changes and development activities, and effectively participate in municipal planning and review processes. The presentation will also highlight opportunities for collaboration with landowners, conservation organizations, and local officials to reduce contamination risks and strengthen long-term source water protection efforts. Attendees will gain valuable insight into protecting their drinking water sources through proactive planning, partnerships, and community engagement.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10th

9:10 – 10:10 A.M. – SESSION 2

Do More with Your Meters

Liam Flaherty, Seth Dickinson, E.J. Prescott
(W/WW)

Dive deeper into the ins and outs of integrating technology into your water and wastewater systems with Team EJP and the Smart Utility Professionals. Gain technical insights into optimizing your utilities' systems. This training will discuss technologies that help enhance your systems, including remote monitoring, metering (with built-in acoustic leak detection), advanced software, and how to determine which solution is best for your utility. Q&A will be held at the end of the training.

When the Wheels Come Off…We Bring the Trailer. Emergency Response, Resources, & Readiness

Chris Cossette, Wiscasset Water District
(W/WW)

It's not a question of if something will go wrong with your utility infrastructure. It's a question of when — and whether you'll have the people, equipment, and resources to respond.



9:10 – 10:10 A.M. – SESSION 2, continued…

From water main breaks and power outages to flooding, staffing shortages, and unexpected equipment failures, utilities face challenges that can quickly overwhelm their available resources. Fortunately, you don't have to face those challenges alone!

Since their introduction in 2023, Maine Rural Water Association's Emergency Response and Training Trailers have become an increasingly valuable resource for utilities across Maine. Join us as we explore how these trailers have evolved, where they've been deployed, and how they can support your utility when the unexpected happens.

We'll also discuss why emergency preparedness goes well beyond having a written plan. Knowing who to call, what resources are available, and how to build relationships before an emergency can make all the difference when every minute counts. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: (1) Identify available emergency response resources, including MRWA's Emergency Response and Training Trailers, and understand how to request and access assistance; (2) Describe the evolution and real-world applications of MRWA's emergency response program since 2023, including deployments, training opportunities, and lessons learned; (3) Recognize the importance of maintaining a practical Emergency Response Plan that identifies critical infrastructure, equipment needs, staffing contingencies, and available outside resources; (4) Identify opportunities to strengthen mutual aid networks through relationships with neighboring utilities, vendors, contractors, emergency management agencies, and other response partners; and (5) Evaluate their own utility's emergency readiness by identifying potential gaps in equipment, staffing, communications, and response capabilities before an emergency occurs.

Unlocking the Power of TOC Optimization

Loyd Rawlings, USABlueBook
(W)

This class will focus on the importance of Total Organic Carbon (TOC) treatment optimization. We'll explore how TOC impacts water operations, including turbidity removal and filtration. The course will also cover strategies for TOC removal and how a multifaceted approach can improve both water quality and overall operations.

The $1 Billion Question: How Maine Water Districts Can Plan for Rising Infrastructure Costs

Jonathan Dunitz, Sampson Hamilton, Verrill-Dana, LLP
(W/Admin/WW Mgmt)

Maine's water systems face an estimated $1 billion+ in infrastructure needs over the next 20 years, from aging pipes and storage tanks to treatment upgrades and new compliance



9:10 – 10:10 A.M. – SESSION 2, continued…

requirements. Federal support is also shrinking: the temporary federal infrastructure funding that has boosted Maine's drinking water loan program since 2022 ends in 2027. This session gives district administrators a practical overview of the challenge and the tools available to start addressing it. Attendees will learn about state and federal funding sources, including the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, principal forgiveness, and grant programs. The session also covers rate structuring, asset management, and long-term capital planning. Attendees will leave with a short list of issues to start evaluating now, so their district is positioned to compete for funding and avoid sudden rate increases.

Guarding the Digital Pipeline: How Water Utility Owners Can Protect their Systems & Vet IT Contracts for Robust Cybersecurity

Joshua Laufer, Maine DWP; Daisy Mueller, CISA
(W/WW/Admin)

Known cybersecurity attacks against public water systems nationally are increasing in scale and severity, and with the high volume of alerts and messaging about the risks, alarm fatigue is a growing concern. In a novel approach to raise PWS cybersecurity and awareness, the Drinking Water Program is piloting a new communications strategy with PIs at the helm. During annual inspections, a subset of systems will have DWP PIs engage system operators in face-to-face, no-fault conversations about basic cybersecurity protections, and provide a list of voluntary, free, but crucial mitigations to bolster utility cybersecurity. This half-hour session will showcase this new approach to encourage systems to proactively protect their systems from digital threats and solicit feedback from the audience.

However, as the complexity and challenges in securing the digital perimeter grow, water and wastewater facilities increasingly depend on Managed Service Providers (MSPs) to support their network infrastructure. This outsourcing of routine IT operations introduces significant third-party cybersecurity risks. Standard MSP contracts and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) frequently focus on general uptime and troubleshooting response times rather than proactive cyber hygiene, leaving critical infrastructure vulnerable to compromise. This half-hour session equips water utility owners, directors, and municipal leaders with a practical framework for evaluating and negotiating MSP agreements to enforce robust cybersecurity standards. Attendees will discover key questions to ask prospective and current providers regarding access controls, routine patch management, incident notification windows, and audit rights, empowering facilities to hold external partners accountable and safeguard their operations.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10th

11:40 A.M. – 12:40 P.M. – SESSION 3

DWP Updates

Amy LaChance
(W/VSWS/Admin)

Amy Lachance, Maine CDC Drinking Water Program Director, will provide updates on current issues important to Public Water Systems. Topics will include a brief overview of the new Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI), an update on the lowered Maximum Contaminant Levels for PFAS and state rule status, a discussion of other new drinking water rules on the horizon, the status of the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan and Grant Applications, and other relevant issues.

Finding the Line, Finding the Leak: Tools & Techniques for Detection

Jim Flint, Eastcom Associates, Inc.
(W/WW)

Finding buried infrastructure and tracking down leaks starts before you ever arrive at the job site. This session will walk operators through the practical steps of line locating and leak detection, beginning with how to effectively use system maps, as-builts, historical records, and other available information to better understand what may be underground. Participants will review the basic principles of line locating, including how locating equipment works and the factors that can affect the accuracy of a locate. The session will then move into leak detection, exploring tools ranging from traditional listening devices such as sonoscopes to more advanced equipment, including electronic listening devices, correlators, and line locators. Throughout the session, the focus will be on practical field application, understanding what each tool can tell you, recognizing its limitations, and selecting the right approach to efficiently locate buried infrastructure and narrow down the source of a water leak.

Ductile Iron Pipe 101

Jonathan Mann, U.S. Pipe
(W/WW)

This presentation provides an in-depth overview of Ductile Iron Pipe (DIP) and its applications for management of water treatment plants, water distribution systems, wastewater treatment plants, and wastewater collection systems. Key highlights include the history and development of DIP, the material properties and advantages of using DIP in various infrastructural projects, detailed insights into the manufacturing process, quality standards, and testing methods, as well as installation techniques and best practices.

11:40 A.M. – 12:40 P.M. – SESSION 3, continued…

Maine DOT Permits & Requirements for Utility Work

Douglas Brown, Ron Cote, Maine DOT
(W/WW/Admin)

This session will provide an overview of Utility Location Permits and Highway Opening Permits, including application requirements, associated fees, and conditions that may affect utility projects. Participants will learn about highway opening moratoriums, restrictions on winter work, and the procedures and considerations involved in emergency utility repairs. The presentation will help operators and utility personnel better understand Maine DOT's requirements, avoid common permitting challenges, and plan and coordinate utility work safely and efficiently.

The Project is Funded. Now What?

Chris Cossette, Wiscasset Water District; Jenna Rzasa, Tata & Howard, Inc.
(W/WW/Admin)

Securing funding for an infrastructure project is a major accomplishment, but what happens next? This session will explore the important steps and responsibilities involved in moving a water or wastewater infrastructure project from funding approval through construction and completion. The discussion will emphasize effective communication with boards, customers, and project partners, as well as the importance of maintaining working relationships with engineers, resident observers, and contractors throughout the project. Participants will also learn why proper documentation is essential and what information should be recorded.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10th

12:50 – 1:50 P.M. – SESSION 4

Restraint Essentials for Pipelines

Senuda Rajapakse, Tyler Union
(W/WW)

Proper joint restraint is essential for maintaining pipeline integrity and preventing failures in water distribution systems. This session will cover how restraints work, the different types available, and when each should be used. Participants will learn proper installation techniques for mechanical joint restraints, including the importance of correct torque and gasket compression. The session will also explore applications where restrained joints can be used as an alternative to traditional thrust blocks.



12:50 – 1:50 P.M. – SESSION 4, continued…

The History of Chemical Feed

Danny Smith, TiSales
(W/WW/VSWS)

Chemical feed systems have played an important role in the evolution of water and wastewater treatment. This session will explore the history of chemical feed, from early methods of chemical application to the development of modern metering pumps and automated dosing systems. Participants will learn how advancements in chemical feed equipment, technology, and control methods have improved the accuracy, reliability, and safety of chemical treatment processes. The presentation will also examine how these developments have influenced today's chemical feed practices and discuss the importance of proper equipment selection, operation, and maintenance in achieving consistent treatment results.

Artificial Recharge to Groundwater Supply

Thomas Page, Underwood Engineers
(W)

The City of Dover NH is currently operating an Artificial Aquifer Recharge system for the Pudding Hill Aquifer, one of its primary sources of drinking water. To supplement aquifer yield, surface water is withdrawn from the Bellamy River at up to 800 gpm and discharged to two infiltration basins near the three production wells. The wells are treated for iron, manganese, 14 Dioxane and PFAS at an adjacent facility. Artificial Recharge also serves to reduce the transport of contaminants to the wells. This presentation will include the concepts of Artificial Recharge, permitting challenges, facilities constructed, and experience from startup and operation. Experience from media changeout at the PFAS treatment plant and at other artificial recharge facilities will also be described

Working Safely in the Road

Peter Coughlan, Maine DOT
(W/Admin/WW Mgmt)

This session will concentrate on and emphasize the importance of workers (and flaggers) being aware of vehicles at all times while working on or near a roadway. It's too easy to become complacent when working in the road day after day. Every week in Maine there is a crash (or are crashes) where drivers cross over centerlines or have head on crashes or just go off the road. With driver's habits and distractions today, it's crucial to pay attention and have your head on a swivel! This session should raise awareness for all and hopefully remind all workers that routinely working in the road has many risks.



12:50 – 1:50 P.M. – SESSION 4, continued…

Cross Connection Control

Loyd Rawlings, USA BlueBook
(W/Admin)

Ideal for system managers and operators, this course provides you with the knowledge to set up a cross-connection control program for your water system. Devices, testing information and survey information are provided.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10th

2:00 – 3:00 P.M. – SESSION 5

Water Service Line Repairs: Fittings, Corrosion, & Proper Installation

Chris Remick, F.W. Webb
(W/WW)

This session will explore common types of fittings used in water service connections and repairs, including their applications and considerations for proper selection. Participants will learn about galvanic corrosion, how it occurs when dissimilar metals are used, and methods for reducing corrosion-related failures. The presentation will also cover proper installation practices to help prevent leaks, maintain system integrity, and extend the service life of repaired connections. Attendees will gain practical knowledge to support effective service line maintenance and repair in water distribution systems.

Understanding the Lead & Copper Rule Improvements

Jasmine Bouchard, Logan Hallat, Maine DWP
(W/Admin)

The Maine Drinking Water Program will discuss upcoming deadlines and requirements to prioritize as we work towards implementation of the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI). Topics will include a brief overview of the LCRI as well as requirements for the baseline inventory, sample site plan, and service line replacement plan. The DWP will also highlight other key items water systems should be doing now to best prepare for implementation.

2:00 – 3:00 P.M. – SESSION 5, continued…

The Right Parts at the Right Time: Inventory Management for Utilities

John Leach, Corey Hanks, E.J. Prescott
(W/WW)

Effective inventory management is essential for maintaining efficient water and wastewater utility operations while controlling costs and ensuring critical materials are available when needed. This session will cover the fundamentals of inventory control, including the costs associated with purchasing, storing, and maintaining inventory. Participants will explore methods for tracking materials, managing stock levels, and reducing unnecessary expenses while avoiding shortages that could disrupt operations. The presentation will also introduce inventory management systems and tools that can help utilities improve organization, streamline purchasing, and make informed decisions about their inventory needs.

Moving the Road to Protect Water Quality: Lessons Learned from Adams Pond

Rebecca Jacobs, Boothbay Region Water District
(W)

Boothbay Region Water District supplies water to the Boothbay peninsula from two open-source water supplies: Adams Pond and Knickerbocker Lake. As is common in New England, the roads surrounding Adams Pond are very close to the water supply, often less than 10 feet. To reduce non-point source pollution, the water district moved 1000' linear feet of road frontage on Adams Pond and added nearly one acre of vegetated buffer in 2025. Learn about the process, successes, lessons learned, funding and the partnerships that made this project possible.

PFAS Treatment for Rural Systems: How to Plan, Design, & Implement Treatment Options for PFAS Management

William Guite, Clear Creek Systems
(W/WW)

This course provides water operators with practical training on the treatment and management of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in small and rural drinking water systems. The course focuses on operator responsibilities for monitoring, treatment selection, system design considerations, operational performance, and compliance with current drinking water regulations. Participants will review the sources and behavior of PFAS compounds in drinking water supplies and evaluate treatment technologies commonly used in public water systems, including granular activated carbon (GAC), ion exchange resin systems, and membrane filtration processes. Emphasis is placed on treatment effectiveness, operational monitoring, media replacement schedules, residuals handling, and lifecycle cost considerations for rural communities.