

Maine Water Environment NEWS

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May 2019 • Spring
A Publication of the Maine Water Environment Association

President's Corner

By Stacy Thompson, Saco WRRD



The first question I have is, when will it stop raining? I know April showers bring May flowers, but can I see the sun for maybe more than two hours? Also, in watching the weather today...Apparently May 2nd was 90 in Portland last year! Last week I was up in Presque Isle for the North Country Convention, which was held at the Northern Maine Community College. I was half expecting to see a ton of snow there, but to my surprise, not much. Leeann and Spring with JETCC truly know how to organize a great show and I was completely honored and humbled to be a part of it. I hope that the work that JETCC, MEWEA and MWUA utilities have done in the past and this year, will continue to grow for

many years to come.

MEWEA once again was well represented at the Urban Runoff 5K! I did do the race, but technically I didn't run the race! Thank you to Paula Drouin for walking with me in the drizzle. Thank you to the YP Committee for holding down the fort at the MEWEA booth and bringing the "What to Flush" game.

I'll be attending the Southern Maine Children's Water Festival being held at the University of Southern Maine on May 17th. Stuart Rose from the MEDEP got me involved in this show a couple years back and I absolutely love it! I show the wastewater model to all the kids that attend and show them some microorganisms under the microscope. It is a great feeling to know that I shared with them what it is we do and how we protect the environment! Another thing I get to do is judge the artwork from the various schools to be published in the Droplet Newsletter. Considering how I can barely draw a stick figure, its nice to see kids with creativeness and the ability to draw!

In keeping with the tradition Matt Timberlake started with the President's message. Although not weekly, I attempt to do two a month. If there is ever anything you want mentioned, feel free to email me at sthompson@sacomaine.org and I will include it in the message. Thanks...and onto summer!!

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Upcoming Executive Committee Meeting Dates:

June 21 – Maine Municipal Association



Young Professionals - Committee Update

By Max Kenney, Woodard and Curran

The Young Professionals Committee teamed with the Collections Committee to attend the Urban Runoff, a 5k run and neighborhood engagement event organized by Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District. This event provides us with the opportunity to educate many of the attendants at our post-race booth, where we were able to talk to an audience of children and families about the importance of stormwater and wastewater treatment. The booth included a Toilet vs. Trash game for children to identify what items are safe to be flushed and what items should be thrown in the trash. Kids got to toss items like poop emojis in the toilet and bacon in the trash.



Maine YPs at MEWEA's Urban Runoff Booth, teaching the youth about what to flush, and what to throw away [left to right: Jordan Heath, City of Portland; Max Kenney, Woodard & Curran; Michael Guethle, Wright-Pierce; Rychel Gibson, Hoyle, Tanner & Associates]

MEWEA was awarded the Largest Non-Profit Team for the 6th year in a row, thanks to the participation of MEWEA members from many committees and communities across the state.

Over the next few months, our attention turns towards planning our fall events and appropriately recognizing those Young Professionals excelling within the industry, with the following awards process, all available through our committee page <https://www.mewea.org/young-professionals-committee/>:

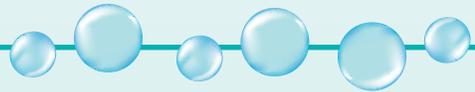
- **Young Professionals Award:** Do you have a younger staff member, a coworker new to the industry, or a friend dedicated to the clean water environment that you would like to recognize for their efforts? Please find the link at our website and nominate them for the Young Professional Award today!

This is your newsletter – if you have news you would like to pass along or an opinion to express that would be of interest to the membership of MEWEA we are always interested in receiving material and will make every effort to incorporate your submissions.

- **Young Professional Higher Education Award:** Each year since 2015 we have been awarding a \$1000 academic achievement award (scholarship) to an intern that is excelling within the clean water industry. If you have an intern that is committed to outstanding work, please nominate them at the committee website.
- **University Convention Attendant:** To boost our connections with universities, we're offering the chance for students to have the YP committee cover their registration to the Fall convention. For more information, please visit our website at the above link.

Please stay tuned for more information on our many exciting events for the end of summer and fall as those plans get finalized. Events include public information booths, an evening of canoeing on the Androscoggin, attendance at the Fall Convention, and Poo & Brew plant tours. Our next meeting is Thursday May 23rd at the Portland office of Wright Pierce (75 Washington Ave. Suite 202, Portland) from 12:00-1:00 – All YPs are encouraged to attend!

If you would like to get involved or have any questions, please contact the Max Kenney, YP Committee Chair, at mkenney@woodardcurran.com



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Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour – Kennebec County – City of Gardiner

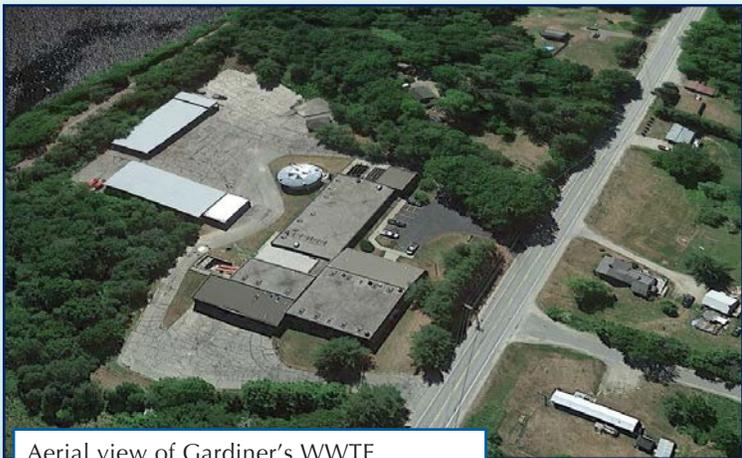
By Bryanna Denis, Wright-Pierce

Driving up to the Gardiner Wastewater Treatment Facility, on a foggy April morning, I was struck at how well hidden the plant is. An inconspicuous brick building nestled in the trees; no large tanks or equipment visible from the road to hint at its purpose. It's easy to see how I drove by at first, and had to double check my GPS to make sure I had the address correct.



The Gardiner WWTF, view from Route 24.

The City of Gardiner's wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) is located on the banks of the Kennebec River just outside of downtown Gardiner.



Aerial view of Gardiner's WWTF.

After arrival, Doug Clark and his crew ushered me inside and proceeded to tell me each and every detail about the plant since it originally came online back in 1982. The building, though inconspicuous from the road, is quite large inside, and houses the entire treatment process except for the chlorine contact tanks outside.

Background

Doug Clark and 3 other operators started up the brand-new plant in September of 1982, and Doug continued working in Gardiner for 17 years. In 1999, Doug left the Gardiner WWTF to manage a compost facility, and later got licensed as a water operator while working at a large filtration plant. In 2014 though, Doug came home to the Gardiner, and to the wastewater industry, to finish his career.

The Gardiner WWTF is a regional facility receiving wastewater flows from gravity sewers and a collection of wastewater pumping stations from Gardiner as well as the communities of Farmingdale and Randolph.

The WWTF can treat up to 4.8 mgd with secondary treatment, though average daily flows are typically in the 1-2 mgd range. However, like many communities in Maine, Gardiner and its member communities have combined systems. High flow events during wet weather and/or spring snow-melt causes flows to exceed collection system and WWTF capacity resulting in untreated combined sewer overflows (CSO) to the Kennebec River. In the last 15 years, Gardiner has completed two major upgrades to prevent future CSOs as follows:

- In 2005, a CSO upgrade provided primary treatment and disinfection to an additional 5 mgd at the plant. This upgrade eliminated all untreated CSOs at the WWTF.
- In 2016, an underground CSO Retention and Treatment Basin (RTB) was added at the Maine Avenue Pump Station in downtown Gardiner. This RTB captures high flows that were formerly bypassed untreated from this location. The RTB provides primary treatment, and stores RTB effluent until flows decrease enough for it to be pumped back into the collection system. The design intent was to capture all bypass flow from 100-year storm events during the seasonal disinfection periods from mid-May to the end of September each year. This has been achieved 100% to date.

Wastewater Treatment Highlights

One of the things I enjoy most about visiting new plants is seeing the unique ways that wastewater is treated. Every plant does things a little differently, and Gardiner is no exception. Some of the less common equipment in Gardiner that I'm highlighting in this article are the influent screw pumps and the rotating biological contactors (RBCs).

Wastewater enters the facility and is pumped up into the building via a screw pump. It's easy to see in person how this slow-rotating pump works... it's an Archimedes Screw!

Cont'd on page 4



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Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour cont'd

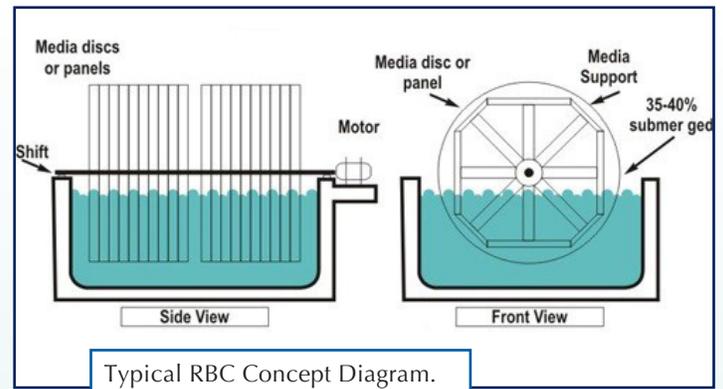
Looks like Archimedes had the right idea back in 300 B.C; though, modern technology has allowed us to upgrade considerably and use a motor to turn the screw. Back in 300 B.C. though, I would imagine turning the screw handle all day was everyone's favorite job. ☺

Secondary Treatment in Gardiner is provided by several RBCs situated in two parallel treatment basins located within the operations building. The slow-rotating discs provide a large amount of surface area for bugs (or biofilm) to attach and grow. As the RBCs rotate, the attached biofilm is immersed in wastewater taking up BOD and nutrients, then on the upswing are exposed again to oxygen for aeration.

Under ideal conditions, the rotating action causes excess heavy biofilm to slough off and is removed from the process in the secondary clarifiers. However, several of the high-density discs in Gardiner are having "loping" problems, due to uneven biofilm growth on the discs. Loping causes excess stress on the rotating shaft and can even cause the discs to slip or break on the shaft and stop rotating altogether.

Gardiner's RBCs were originally installed back in 1982 and were replaced in 1998 making them over 20 years old at this point. Doug Clark informed me that their capital improvements plan includes upgrading their old, failing RBCs and several other components at the plant this year.

Thanks to Doug Clark and the whole Gardiner crew for taking the time to meet with me; their dedication and enthusiasm to clean water and the wastewater industry is evident. 🌊



Fun Facts about Gardiner's WWTF:

Gardiner currently dewater sludge with a Huber inclined screw press. But back in the day, their old belt filter press was only able to dewater their sludge to a solids percentage in the mid-teens, compared with percent solids well into the 20s today. A sludge truck would haul the, still watery, sludge offsite to a disposal facility.

One sweltering summer day 20 or so years ago, a harried private contractor sludge truck driver was taking his usual route from Water Street turning onto Church Street in downtown Gardiner. Maybe he didn't brake soon enough and took the sharp turn a little too quickly; maybe the sludge was a little wetter than usual, whatever the reason...

Several cars parked along the street were inundated with hot, stinky sludge (several vehicles, of course, with the windows and sunroofs wide open). The event made it into the local papers, and if I were the newspaper editor... I can imagine a sensational headline on the front-page reading:

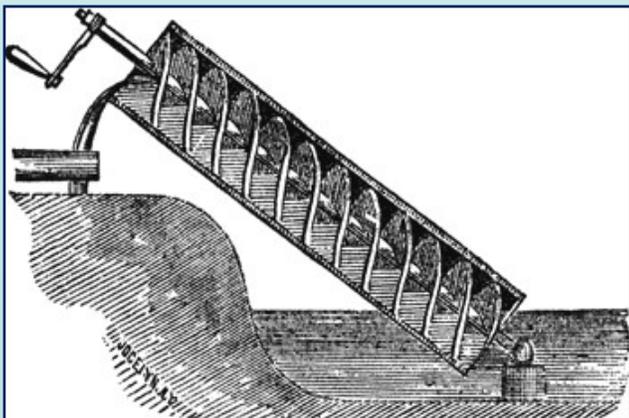
"SLUDGE TSUNAMI STRIKES IN GARDINER"



Influent Screw Pumps, view from exterior.



Influent Screw Pumps, view from inside building



Hand Powered Archimedes Screw Pump.

Where are they Now? Featuring Vivian Matkivich

Like most retirees, I constantly get that question “so, how do you like retirement?” I imagine they are thinking my life is now watching Price Is Right and soaps, followed by quiet evenings knitting sweaters for my cats. However, truth is that within a couple months of my retirement date, I became a twice weekly volunteer errand runner at a hospital I previously inspected as a pretreatment coordinator. I already knew several people there, was familiar with the campus, and wanted a community service job that involved plenty of social interaction and exercise. It was a great fit. I also do an hour a week helping transport donations from a local supermarket to a food pantry. And this year I was honored to return as Coach of the MEWEA Operations Challenge Team, Force Maine, that involves practice dates, competitions and travel. Of course, it’s not all sweat and toil. I now have way more free time, spending a month every winter in Jupiter, Florida, visiting family and friends for several days at a time, and saying “yes” when other retired friends need a travel buddy to somewhere fun. And naturally, I am out several nights a week to get those happy hour specials, play Trivia, and enjoy the free monthly AARP beer at a local pub! So, my answer is “I love retirement and I am as busy as ever!”



PFAS at the North Country Convention

By Jeff McBurnie, Casella Organics - Residuals Management Chair and Maine State Director

The North Country Convention, held on April 24-25 in Presque Isle, Maine saw its best attendance ever and one of the hot topics of the meeting was perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Discussions throughout the two-day meeting ranged from informal, ‘in the hall’-type conversations to formal presentations on the training program including:

- Maine DEP Commissioner Gerald Reid gave the Wednesday key note address at lunch and among his talking points was an overview of the PFAS situation in Maine and the actions the Department was undertaking.
- On Thursday, there was a full three-hour training track on PFAS and contaminants of emerging concern in general.
 - ❖ In the morning, DEP Senior Hydrogeologist Chris Evans gave a brief overview of the Department’s policy regarding biosolids and residuals land application, followed by a comprehensive discussion of the proper techniques for sample collection of materials with potential PFAS contamination. The session was well-attended, and a informative Q&A session followed the presentation.
 - ❖ In the afternoon, Ned Beecher, Executive Director of the Northeast Biosolids and Residuals Association, presented on the history and challenges of Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs), primarily focusing on PFAS and its impacts to the regulated community. Again, the presentation had a great crowd and the post presentation Q&A was spirited.

MEWEA will continue to follow the PFAS situation in Maine and participate in efforts to develop a timely and science-based resolution. MEWEA nominated Andre Brousseau of the Sanford Sewerage District and Jeff McBurnie from Casella Organics to serve on the Governor’s Task Force on PFAS and they have been officially appointed. The Task Force will convene its first meeting on May 22nd in Augusta.

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Limestone Ratepayers Already Seeing Savings from Switch to Solar

By Chris Bouchard, The County, Hub for the Aroostook Republican, Houlton Pioneer Times, and The Star-Herald

*Article previously published on March 19, 2019 in *The County*

LIMESTONE, Maine — Limestone is continuing to see savings as it adopts more progressive energy alternatives. Town officials currently are considering switching to LED street lights, and last year, contractors broke ground on a 1,728 panel solar array capable of producing 596 kilowatts of power, offsetting 86 percent of the Limestone Water and Sewer District's electricity costs.

ReVision Energy recently installed this 1,728 panel solar array capable of producing 596 kilowatts of power, offsetting 86 percent of the Limestone Water and Sewer District's electricity costs. The Water and Sewer District, a quasi-municipal entity based in Limestone, already has saved more than \$3,000 on energy costs with the solar panels in just three months, according to one official's estimates.

Three parties are primarily responsible for this solar project: the Limestone Water and Sewer District, ReVision Energy, and Aligned Climate Capital, LLC.

Officials with the Limestone Water and Sewer District contacted ReVision Energy last year to head up the solar construction project. Then Aligned Climate Capital, an investor focused exclusively on clean energy and climate-friendly alternatives, was brought in to fund the project through a "power purchase agreement." That allows the town to buy the electricity generated at the site at a lower cost than they would have otherwise paid Emera.

With the funding secured, ReVision Energy installed the solar arrays at no upfront cost.

Jim Leighton, Limestone Water and Sewer District superintendent, said the array has been up and running since Dec. 19, 2018, and that the panels already are producing more energy than initially anticipated.

Limestone Town Manager Elizabeth Dickerson also was pleased with the project's progress.

"I think any time we can use renewable energy to meet our energy needs," she said, "it's a great thing. The more we can do in this area for the town, the better."

Chuck Kelley, a member of the Water and Sewer District Board of Trustees, echoed Leighton's sentiments about production being higher than anticipated.

"We were looking at approximately five to six thousand a year in savings," he said, "and right now it looks like we're at about \$3,300 for the first three months of the year."

He said these initial projections are particularly good news since they are based on power generated during one of the worst periods of the year in terms of sunlight.

"I have to confirm a few things but that's what it's looking like," he said. "Even if it's off a little bit, it's still pretty good."

Kelley said that while the power purchase agreement could continue for 25 years, the district has an option in the contract to buy out the solar array after five years and own it outright at a discounted rate that would knock 40 percent off of the installation cost.

Between now and then, Kelley said the Water and Sewer District is going to put away the money saved via the array and use it toward that purchase.

The three and a half acre site also is within the district's wellhead protection area, a zone where not many projects can be built due to the potential for spills and hazards. Solar arrays, however, are one of the few projects that can be built in this type of zone.

Representatives of the community, ReVision, and the water districts of neighboring towns, celebrated the success of the project in Limestone on March 14. Revision Energy employees made a presentation about the project to the group and then gave a tour of the array.

Holly Noyes, public relations manager at ReVision Energy, said the event was not only a celebration but also intended to get the word out to neighboring communities as well.

"Limestone Water and Sewer District wanted to host this event for other districts," Noyes said, "as well as for people in other communities and other town officials. The presentation will cover different opportunities for water and waste treatment districts in nearby communities, so those officials can learn about the details of this project and how it came together."

Kurt Penney, a commercial solar consultant, began the presentation by giving a brief overview of ReVision Energy, a company that started about 15 years ago as "a couple of guys in a garage" and now employs over 250 people. The company, which is completely employee-owned via an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), is a certified B Corporation, meaning that its mission goes beyond profit.

"We're not just trying to sell more solar," said Penney, "but also trying to change the paradigm. Our mission statement is to accelerate and lead the transition to a clean, renewable energy economy in New England, and I'd say we're officially in northern New England today."

Bryan Byrne, the project manager, said he was "one of those guys

Cont'd on page 7

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Limestone Ratepayers cont'd

who started in the garage," adding that it has been nice to see the company's progression. Byrne then provided an overview of how the project came to fruition by showing the crowd photos taken during construction.

Everything began in a field where the former industrial park was located. Leighton and the Water and Sewer District crew mowed the field as the ReVision team scheduled to have materials delivered.

"We organized the materials and then staked out the field so a surveyor could come in," Byrne said. "Then we brought in the big machines and started driving piles."

After that, the crew took all of their organized materials and began to erect the structure.

Of all the pictures, Byrne said his favorite was of the main distribution panel indicating that the solar array was successfully drawing power.

Looking back on the project, Noyes said she and the ReVision team had "a great time working with the wonderful people here in Aroostook County."

"Our team loved being up here," she said. "We are looking forward to working with other water districts, and have been in early conversations with other municipalities as well regarding solar energy. We are more than excited to be working here in Aroostook County and helping Maine move forward as we look at solar energy." ●



A large group attended a tour on March 14 of a solar array recently installed by ReVision Energy to help offset costs to the Limestone Water and Sewer District. Seen here with the array are, back row from left, Chuck Kelley, Limestone Water and Sewer District trustee; Wayne Bourgoine, Limestone Water and Sewer District chief water plant operator; Jim Leighton, Limestone Water and Sewer District superintendent, Russell Plourde, Tim Ouellette, and Fred Page of Caribou Utilities; James Cote, Limestone Water and Sewer District trustee; Elizabeth Dickerson, Limestone town manager; Hugh Kirkpatrick, Caribou Utilities general manager; and Matt Palmer, Washburn Water and Sewer District superintendent. In the front are, from left, Holly Noyes, ReVision public relations manager; Andrew Kahl, ReVision commercial solar consultant; Bill Sheehan of the Presque Isle Maine Department of Environmental Protection; Brian Byrne, ReVision solar project manager; and Kurt Penney, ReVision commercial solar consultant.

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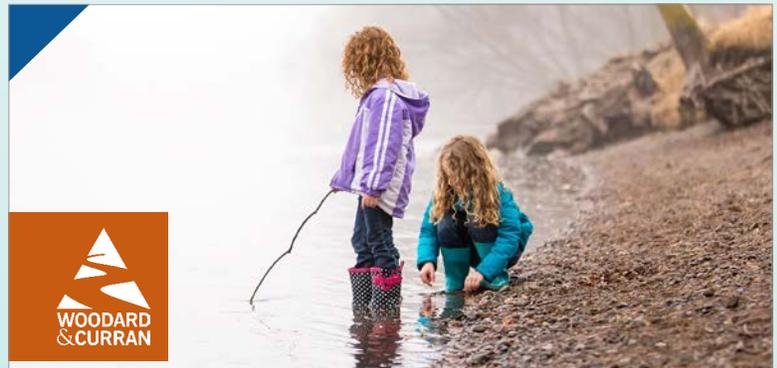
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Announcements & Awards

Award Nominations Can Now Be Submitted Online! Visit <https://www.mewea.org/recognition-program/> for a list of awards, including descriptions, and a list of past recipients. Nominate someone today!



A Big Thank You - MEWEA Force Maine is honored to receive a donation of PVC pipe from Team E.J. Prescott for pipe repair event practice sessions. E.J. Prescott, founded in Gardiner, Maine in 1955, distributes equipment and supplies to waterworks throughout New England and beyond. They have long been a sponsor of Operations Challenge teams and we sincerely appreciate their continued support. The regional competition will be held at Wentworth by the Sea in Newcastle N.H., June 4-5, 2019.



Schedule of Events

June 2-5, 2019 - NEWEA Spring Meeting, Location: Wentworth by the Sea, New Castle, NH

June, 2019 - Clean Water Week Poster Contest Winner (date TBD), Location: Veterans Memorial Park, Main St. Lewiston, followed by plant tour at LAWPCA, Lincoln St. Lewiston, ME

June 21, 2019 - Executive Committee Meeting, Location: TBD

August 16, 2019 - Executive Committee Meeting, Location: TBD

September 11-13, 2019 - MEWEA Fall Convention, Location: Point Lookout, Northport ME

September 21-25, 2019 - WEFTEC, Location: Cross Insurance Center, Chicago, IL

New England Craft Brew Summit

By Benjamin Pearson, City of Portland

Maine has an established craft beer scene with more breweries opening every year and Portland is high on the list of most breweries per capita! Breweries can have an impact on water resources throughout the state, whether discharging to a sewer system, septic system, or from stormwater runoff. To help educate and provide fact sheets around the impact of breweries, Ben Pearson and Sandy Perry represented MEWEA at the New England Craft Brew Summit held in Portland on March 1st.

The event had several hundred participants from New England and beyond. The fact sheet's topics ranged from brewery wastewater to chemical management to stormwater. The information was helpful to many folks who stopped by to see what we were all about. Beyond the fact sheets, several great conversations were had with brewers, distillers, and even a vineyard owner. Whether they utilize a sanitary sewer collection system or utilize a septic tank, each one person had a similar interest in how to better manage their wastewater.

While both types of systems have their pros and cons, it appeared that the users of septic systems were more interested in discussing their setups and the best way to approach wastewater. Many of these septic system users are located in rural areas and manage their wastewater differently than sewer system users, though both remarked that the fact sheets, particularly on chemical management, were helpful.

With the potential impact from high organic loadings on treatment plants, getting this information out and acting as a technical resource is an important part of MEWEA's mission.

The Industrial Pretreatment Committee will continue to prepare more fact sheets to help provide information and also will continue to work with Maine Brewers Guild to help educate brewers about what can be done in their daily operations to limit the impact. Perhaps in the future, MEWEA should look to present some helpful topics at future events so that brewers can continue to see us as a resource.



Sandy Perry and Ben Pearson at the New England Craft Brew Summit.

Clean Water Week Poster Contest 2019

By Alex Buechner, City of Biddeford, Treatment Plant Operators Committee Chair

It's that time of year again. May first rolls around and everyone starts to panic about where they are going to get their 2020 calendars. Fear not friends, the new MEWEA Clean Water Week poster calendars will be available in just 6 or 7 short months!

If you are not already aware of this event, last month we received posters from all over the state from students grades 1-12 highlighting what clean water means to them. This is an excellent way to get students, teachers and parents all talking about something that is vital to public health and the environment, but that most people take for granted. The posters were voted on last week by the attendees of the North Country Convention held at Northern Maine Community College and the top 12 posters get turned into the calendars that I know you are all eagerly awaiting. The top students from each grade group will also be awarded with a \$100 check that they can spend on outfits for their Fortnite characters, or whatever the kids are into these days.

All twelve students and their parents will be invited to an open house event that will be held at the Lewiston Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority treatment plant on June 12 from 9:00am-12:00pm (rain date of June 19th). We will be providing a tour and snacks, as well as presenting the winners with their checks for a photo op (I was shooting for giant cardboard checks but that got shot down). If anyone is interested in joining to help out, or to take a tour for themselves, all are welcome. Please contact me at alex.buechner@biddefordmaine.org for details.

I want to end this with one final observation. While we still had over 250 entries into the contest this year, participation was down by quite a bit from last year. I partially blame myself for this. Last year I took the time to personally reach out to my home town (Shapleigh) and the town I work in (Biddeford) to make sure the teachers were aware of the contest and to show them that we are passionate about what we do. I also took the opportunity to let them know that we are available to come talk to kids at the schools or to provide tours of our facilities, both of which we were taken up on. I was proud that year that out of the 450 entries we received, 85 of them were from the Biddeford and Shapleigh schools. It showed me that a little bit of effort on our end can go a long way when it comes to public outreach and education. This year, after NOT taking the time to reach out personally, we received less than 10 submissions from those schools. For me this just reaffirms what I already believed: That it is on US to help people think about and appreciate all it takes to keep our water ways clean. Poster contest or not, I would encourage all operators, maintenance staff, lab techs, supervisors and MEWEA members to take the time to reach out to your community and let them know that we are here. Happy to keep our waters clean, happy to teach what we do and why we do it, and most of all, happy to show off how something that can be considered a dirty job by some, is actually so much cooler and more interesting than people realize. 🌊



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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/778718278939822/>

North Country Convention 2019

By Leeann Hanson, JETCC, NEIWPC

Some might find it hard to say what received greater enthusiasm at the 2019 North Country Convention. Standing room only at a “Going Solar” presentation, eye opening details during the “PFAS Sampling” talk, operator engagement in the “Hands-On Lab” sessions or the potato martinis and comradery during the corn-hole competition during the meet-greet in the exhibit area.

The 2019 North Country Convention (NCC) held for the first time at Northern Maine Community College (NMCC) on April 24 & 25, was the largest ever with classes and activities for more than 187 participants. With NMCC offering logistical and resource support, partners Maine Water Environment Association (MEWEA) and Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) also played critical roles to make the event possible. Staff from Maine DEP’s Northern Maine Regional Office also contributed equipment and assistance leading into and during the event.

For two days participants had 28 different sessions to choose from with topics ranging from “Pipe and Manhole Inspection” to “Nutrient Regulation” to “Programmable Logic Controls”. Many participants, however, situated themselves in NMCC’s newly constructed lab for training led by one of the 9 laboratorians who’d traveled 2–4 hours to lead sessions. As with most JETCC training, all presenters who assisted with classes volunteered their services seeing this event as another way to give back to the industry to which they are so committed.

The 2-day event began with participants seated at conference tables in the gymnasium surrounded by exhibitor displays. Thirty-six companies were represented, some sharing exhibit tables. NEIWPC-JETCC Training Coordinator Leeann Hanson opened the conference expressing gratitude to the convention partners and the many exhibitors and sponsors who helped behind the scenes including to JETCC office counterpart Spring Connolly. A welcoming address from Northern Maine Community College’s Business & Industry Coordinator, Edward Wright, led into the first educational session when Larry Girvan of Maine DHHS began the “State Agency Briefing”. Next Maine DEP’s Brian Kavanah emphasized the need for sustainable funding for Maine’s drinking water and wastewater

infrastructure. After several years as the Director of the Division of Water Quality Management, Mr. Kavanah is now Maine DEP’s new Director of the Bureau of Water Quality



Once students headed toward the smaller classes, interested exhibitors enjoyed a guided tour of NMCC’s Lab Facilities such as Precision Machine, Wind Power, Automotive, Plumbing and Heating and the new Water Technology Lab.

During lunch on day one NEIWPC Executive Director Susan Sullivan explained JETCC’s role as a NEIWPC project in Maine and how Maine operators benefit from NEIWPC- JETCC’s ties to other New England states. Keynote speaker Maine DEP Commissioner Gerald Reid then addressed the audience by recognizing the important work being done by those in the room on behalf of environmental protection.

Six hours of classes concluded with a Meet-Greet for participants and exhibitors to mingle in a relaxed social setting. Titled “Spuds & Suds”, the culinary centerpiece of this event was a mashed potato buffet, similar to an ice cream sundae buffet, but instead where one could have their martini glass of mashed potatoes garnished with bacon, cheese, chives, salsa or other goodies. Culminating in a corn-hole competition, 30 teams and jovial bystanders were entertained as much by Travis Jones commentary as they were by the competition. Chris Bagley of CES and Tim Cook of Blake Equipment took home trophies when they became the 2019 North Country Convention Champions.

Day two of the convention opened on April 25 with a hearty buffet breakfast followed by six more hours of class choices in 4 different campus locations including the lab. Popular topics included “How to Write SOPs”, “Going Solar”, “Lagoon Nutrients & Sludge Removal” and the a couple timely sessions on PFAS...its history, “Sample Collection”, and how to address these “Contaminants of Emerging Concern”

Applause of approval arose during lunch when NMCC President Tim Crowley announced that Gilles St. Pierre has been hired to lead the Water Treatment Technology program as NMCC’s newest faculty member. Convention partners MEWEA

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North Country Convention 2019 cont'd

and MWUA then addressed the audience. MEWEA President Stacy Thompson explained what MEWEA has been doing for its members including the DC trip, the value of teamwork and collaboration, and how for 2019 the association concentrated fully on the NCC, instead of a spring conference. Hence the spring membership meeting ensued as MEWEA Officers Jeff McBurnie and Mac Richardson gave financial and other activity reports. Finally, Bruce Berger of MWUA spoke on the benefits and importance of considering that anyone you encounter along the way in our industry could easily become a friend or ally in the future.

The NCC was created in 1990 to serve the operators in Northern Maine and as a compliment to similar events offered in other regions of the state through MEWEA and MWUA. The NCC takes

place every two years. In 2019 roughly half of the students, instructors and exhibitors at the conference traveled from central and southern Maine or from out of state to participate.

Past NCCs were held at Presque Isle Hotels, however NMCC became a logical host location as they are now completing the first year of their new Water Treatment Technology program. With a sparkling new water and wastewater laboratory, a progression of lab classes were held in that facility. NMCC Water Treatment Technology students were invited to participate in all conference activities, but the majority chose lab sessions led by expert laboratorians from all over Maine.

By the conclusion of the NCC, many presenters and product representatives expressed an interest in welcoming NMCC Water Technology students to their own facilities to work as interns or to get a first-hand look at the tools and equipment essential to our industry.

JETCC, MEWEA and MWUA wish to thank Northern Maine Community College as well as these sponsors who helped make this event possible:

EJ Prescott; Quality Water Products; SIP Industries; Clearwater Laboratory; Xylem-Flygt; Statewide Aquastore; Ti-Sales; Wright-Pierce; Stiles Company; Ted Berry Company; Casella Organics



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