



# WISCONSIN RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

## 2024 IMPACT ON WISCONSIN



*Assisting, educating and representing our members in the wise use of water resources*





## Provides Training...

WRWA continues to be the leading provider of training in the state of Wisconsin to those in the water and wastewater industries. In fact, WRWA is one of the leading trainers of water and wastewater system personnel in the nation.

In 2024, WRWA conducted a total of **194** training sessions and events. These were attended by **6,166** operators, managers, administrative personnel, plumbers, and business representatives.

## Technical Assistance...

Technical assistance to operators of water and wastewater systems in Wisconsin is the backbone of our service to our membership. WRWA conducted **3,105 actual on-site technical assistance visits** in 2024 in addition to **over 5,623 phone calls** to and from systems. WRWA currently has a field staff of 10 providing on-site technical assistance to water and wastewater systems in the state.

WRWA technical assistance is provided in several areas, including regulatory compliance, utility management, solving distribution system problems, treatment, emergency response, source water protection, system operations assistance, energy efficiency, and providing loaner equipment.

## AND

## Resources for Project Funding!

Customer Name	Project Name	District	County	Loan Amount	Grant Amount
Village of Sharon	Sharon WWTP	1	Walworth	\$2,692,000	\$600,000
Village of New Glarus	FY24 Water Reservoir	2	Green	\$2,300,000	\$0
Lyndon Station, Village of	FY22 WWTP	3	Juneau	\$1,552,000	\$0
VILLAGE OF BAY CITY	FY24 SEARCH grant Water	3	Pierce	\$0	\$30,000
Village of Kendall	FY24 PPG Sewer	3	Monroe	\$0	\$30,000
Village of Kendall	FY24 PPG Water	3	Monroe	\$0	\$15,000
Village of Taylor	FY23 - SEARCH Grant	3	Jackson	\$0	\$25,000
Village of Wheeler	FY24 Well project	3	Dunn	\$648,000	\$884,000
Village of Wheeler	FY24 WWTP/Lift Station Upgrades	3	Dunn	\$741,000	\$1,265,000
Burnett SD #1	FY24 - Wastewater Regionalization	6	Dodge	\$380,000	\$1,644,000
Village of St Nazianz	FY24 WWTP Improvements	6	Manitowoc	\$4,301,000	\$4,000,000
City of Rhinelander	FY24 Messer Street Sewer Project	7	Oneida	\$5,217,000	\$1,300,000
Grand View SD #1	FY 23 SEARCH Grant	7	Bayfield	\$0	\$30,000
Village of Clayton	FY24 SEARCH Grant	7	Polk	\$0	\$30,000
Newcap, Inc.	DWS FY24	8	Brown	\$0	\$323,263
				<b>\$17,831,000</b>	<b>\$10,176,263</b>



**Dear Congress: Please prioritize what is working.**

Small and rural communities have the very important public responsibility of complying with all applicable federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act regulations and for supplying the public with safe drinking water and sanitation every second of every day. Over 91% of the approximately 50,000 community water systems serve fewer than 10,000 persons and 81% serve fewer than 3,300 persons. Small and rural communities often have difficulty complying with complicated federal mandates and providing safe/affordable drinking water and sanitation due to limited economies of scale and lack of technical expertise. This difficulty is eased due to ongoing and continuing support offered through rural water training and technical assistance programs as highlighted below.

	Initiative	FY2023 Enacted	FY2024 Enacted	FY2025 House Report	FY2025 Senate Report	FY2026 Request
USDA	Circuit Rider Technical Assistance	\$21,180,000	\$21,817,000	\$21,817,000	\$22,470,000	\$23,562,000
	Wastewater Disposal Technical Assistance	\$37,500,000	\$35,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$35,000,000	\$35,000,000
	Grassroots Source Water Protection Program	\$7,500,000	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$7,500,000	\$7,500,000
	Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program	\$596,404,000	\$595,972,000 <sup>A</sup>	\$496,716,000 <sup>B</sup>	\$496,490,000	\$500,000,000
	Water & Waste Disposal Revolving Loan Funds	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
EPA	Safe Drinking Water Act Technical Assistance	\$30,700,000	\$30,700,000	\$35,000,000	\$32,700,000	\$35,000,000
	Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance	\$27,000,000	\$25,500,000	\$25,500,000	\$27,500,000	\$27,500,000
	Clean Water State Revolving Fund	\$1,638,861,000	\$1,638,861,000	\$1,203,013,000 <sup>C</sup>	\$1,638,861,000 <sup>C</sup>	\$1,638,861,000
	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	\$1,126,101,000	\$1,126,101,000	\$883,515,000 <sup>D</sup>	\$1,126,101,000 <sup>D</sup>	\$1,126,101,000
DOL	National Rural Water Apprenticeship Program	Language included	Language included	\$20,000,000	\$0	\$20,000,000

**A:** WEP Earmarks \$117,484,737 **B:** WEP Earmarks: House- \$119,101,000 (Senate did not include) **C:** CWSRF Earmarks: House \$470,139,492 |Senate \$345,125,000 **D:** DWSRF Earmarks: House \$410,309,777 |Senate \$243,639,000

**How Can Representatives/Senators Support Rural Water?**

1. Write the Appropriations Subcommittee Chairs and Ranking Members in support of Rural Water's **five** funding priorities (or include in Members' formal appropriations requests);
2. Personally contact the Subcommittee Chairs and Ranking Members in support of Rural Water's **five** funding priorities; and
3. Ask the key staff person in each office to contact the Subcommittees in support of Rural Water's **five** funding priorities.

Subcommittee	House	Senate
<b>USDA</b>	Chair TBD Ranking Member TBD	Chair TBD Ranking Member TBD
<b>Interior (EPA)</b>	Chair TBD Ranking Member TBD	Chair TBD Ranking Member TBD
<b>Labor</b>	Chair TBD Ranking Member TBD	Chair TBD Ranking Member TBD

*The National Rural Water Association represents over 31,000 small and rural community members dedicated to drinking water quality, environmental protection and public health protection.*

# Description of Rural Water Priorities

## 1. USDA Circuit Riders

Since 1980, Circuit Riders have provided the primary assistance to small communities for the operation of safe and clean drinking water supplies and compliance with water regulations. This assistance protects the sizable investment the federal government has made in rural water infrastructure. Circuit Riders are in the field every day helping systems with compliance, operations, maintenance, management, disaster response and training. The Circuit Rider Program has long been one of USDA's most successful public-private partnerships, efficiently and effectively using appropriated funds to provide technical assistance and training to rural communities through state based nonprofit associations.

## 2. USDA Farm Service Agency Grassroots Source Water Protection

This is the only statewide local community-based initiative ensuring environmentally progressive local land-use decisions without the controversy and bureaucracy of regulatory programs. It provides each state with at least one full-time person to organize and assist rural communities, farmers, and other land-use interests in the implementation of source water protection plans including non-point source (runoff) protection practices in agriculture regions. This initiative allows the people who benefit from environmental protection to take responsibility for achieving it—ensuring its success and eliminating local controversy.

## 3. EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Technical Assistance and Training

Since 1977, small and rural communities have relied on local/on-site technical assistance and training for compliance with the myriad of federal EPA regulations, avoiding EPA fines, and operating drinking water and wastewater supplies. According to small and rural communities, EPA-funded local initiatives are the most effective environmental protection efforts for drinking water & wastewater, ground water, source water, and compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Small communities want to ensure quality water and stay in compliance—rural water provides them the shared technical resources to do it.

## 4. EPA Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance

Small and rural communities have more difficulty affording public wastewater service due to lack of population density and lack of economies of scale. This challenge is compounded by the fact that rural communities have lower average median household incomes and often have higher rates of poverty. PL 155-270, enacted in October 2018, authorized a new technical assistance program for small and rural communities to improve water quality, operate and maintain public wastewater treatment utilities and comply with federal Clean Water Act standards.

## 5. National Rural Water Apprenticeship Program

Since 2016, NRWA has collaborated with State Rural Water Associations, USDA, DOL, EPA, and local rural water utilities to build the first nationally recognized DOL Registered Apprenticeship Program for water and wastewater system operators. Employment data indicates up to 50% of the rural water workforce will leave the water industry over the next 10 years. Rural water and wastewater utilities need a pipeline of skilled workers to help ensure clean and safe water for the public and to maintain the water infrastructure necessary to keep rural service areas economically viable. To date, thirty-four State Rural Water Associations have federally approved Registered Apprenticeship Programs and are currently offering a job creation program specifically designed by industry leaders to attract, train and retain the next generation rural water workforce with over 900 apprentices enrolled or graduated so far.

**NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION  
FY2026 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY**

*Name of program:* **Circuit Rider Program**

*Appropriations bill:* Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

*Senate subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*Senate subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*House subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*House subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*Department:* United States Department of Agriculture

*Agency:* Rural Utilities Service (within Rural Development)

*Appropriations account:* Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account

*Authorization:* 7 USC 1926(a)(22)

*FY2026 President's budget request:* TBD

Funding History	
FY2021	\$20,157,000
FY2022	\$20,762,000
FY2023	\$21,180,000
FY2024	\$21,817,000
FY2025	TBD

***FY2026 request: \$23,562,000***

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) requests an appropriation of \$23,562,000 for the Circuit Rider Program for FY2026.

The Circuit Rider Program is a five-year competitive contract that was awarded to NRWA on November 1, 2020. The final year of that contract began on November 1, 2024, with a cost of \$22,470,000. This number, or \$22,470,000, is consistent with our FY2025 request and the number pending within the FY2025 Senate reported bill. The FY2025 House reported bill includes \$21,817,000, which is the FY2024 enacted level.

The Rural Development contracting officer requires NRWA to include a cost escalator for annual inflationary purposes necessary to maintain 132 Circuit Riders and to provide the same level of services. Also required is the establishment of a management reserve account to address unforeseen circumstances. The FY2026 request level, or \$23,562,000, is 7.9% increase (\$1,745,000) over the FY2024 enacted level of \$21,817,000. This number, or \$23,562,000, compounds the increase for two fiscal years and includes the federally required cost factors listed above.

**USDA Circuit Rider Justification: Increase the FY2024 enacted level of \$21,817,000 by 7.9%, or \$1,745,000, to \$23,562,000 for FY2026.**

**USDA Rural Development Circuit Rider:** Since 1980, the Circuit Rider Program has been one of USDA's most successful public-private partnerships, efficiently and effectively using appropriated funds to provide technical expertise, training, regulatory compliance, management and disaster assistance to rural communities through state based nonprofit organizations.

There are currently 132 full-time permanent Circuit Riders deployed in the field in all 50 states and Territories. As previously mentioned, this funding request is based on the federal contract requirements and regardless of the appropriations level, the terms and conditions of the contract require NRWA to continue to provide the same level of service, even with interrupted, delayed or reduced federal funding.

State Rural Water Associations provide non-federal matching money to cover their actual cost. In the last reporting cycle, State Rural Water Associations provided \$1,450,510 in non-federal funds to cover the full cost of delivering this program.

In addition to the core services Circuit Riders have provided for decades, demand for these critical services has increased and evolved. Included in these expanded efforts are additional emergency response and recovery efforts and requests, cyber security assistance, and increased regulatory demands to include compliance with the Lead and Copper and PFAS rules. Circuit Riders have also increased their assistance to address operator vacancies attributed to an aging workforce and addressing the increased challenges related to operating and maintaining aging infrastructure.

**Experience and Benefits:** Personnel turnover within this program is very rare. Circuit Riders have approximately 3,000 years of combined experience in the water and wastewater industry. This experience and dedication to the overall mission reaps rewards in additional cost savings provided to the communities served. With this seasoned experienced staff, salary and benefit costs are higher.

**Circuit Riders Protect Federal Investments and Public Health:** Circuit Rider assistance has become even more critical with the loss of over 1,000 USDA Rural Development staff in the field. Circuit Riders' on-site, hands-on assistance, combined with trusted peer-to-peer relationships, enhances all operations including fiscal management, disaster assistance, governance, regulatory compliance, all essential for the sustainability of water and wastewater utilities. This assistance enhances the water system's ability to repay their government debt, protects the low cost of this program while maintaining and enhancing the public health in rural communities. In addition, the Circuit Riders are considered essential employees to perform Mission Critical Services for the U.S. Government during a lapse of appropriations and public health emergencies.

**NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION  
FY2026 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY**

*Name of program:* **Grassroots Source Water Protection Program**

*Appropriations bill:* Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

*Senate subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*Senate subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*House subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*House subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*Department:* United States Department of Agriculture

*Agency:* Farm Service Agency

*Appropriations account:* Grassroots Source Water Protection Program

*Authorization:* 16 U.S.C. 3839bb–2

*FY2026 President’s budget request:* TBD

Funding History	
FY2021	\$6,500,000
FY2022	\$6,500,000
FY2023	\$7,500,000
FY2024	\$7,000,000
FY2025	TBD

***FY2026 request: \$7,500,000***

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) requests an appropriation of \$7,500,000, consistent with the FY2025 Senate reported bill. The FY2025 House reported bill includes \$7,000,000, which is the FY2024 enacted level. NRWA requested, and Congress appropriated \$6.5 million to carry out this initiative from FY2016 to FY2022. For FY2023, Congress increased this account by \$1,000,000 to allow additional activities to include, but are not limited to, enhanced assistance to address nutrient runoff from highly erodible cropland; decline in water quantity and quality related to drought; chemical security mapping; and coordination implementing source water protection practices in high priority areas, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

NRWA currently maintains 55 full-time Grassroots Source Water Protection Program Specialists in the field. Every state has one full-time Source Water Specialist with two Specialists currently provided in Colorado, California, Kansas, Minnesota, and Montana.

**FSA Source Water Justification: Increase the FY2024 enacted level of \$7,000,000 by \$500,000, consistent with FY2025 Senate reported level of \$7,500,000, to maintain current field staff, services, and activities.**

**Grassroots Source Water Protection Initiative:** Protecting public health is the top priority in every water and wastewater system in America. Since 1990, the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) and State Rural Water Associations have assisted water utilities and rural communities in identifying, controlling, and eliminating pollutants from the nation's water resources. The NRWA Source Water Protection Program is built around small water utilities, local businesses, agriculture, government, and other groups working together to develop and implement strategies to protect their drinking water sources. It is a voluntary, grassroots planning effort that builds local responsibility and creates more sustainable communities.

**Source Water Protection:** The FY2026 source water protection program appropriation of \$7,500,000 will allow NRWA to maintain 55 full-time field employees to continue to provide this essential service with enhanced activities.

**Prevention vs. Remediation:** This cooperative program has made significant progress in reducing point source pollution from industrial, agricultural, municipal, and even household sources. The program has also made progress in the challenging area of nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution results from activities over large areas, such as runoff from agriculture, industry, and transportation that flows into water sources. In addition to protecting the health and welfare of U.S. communities, source water protection efforts save consumers money. The USDA estimates damages from soil erosion costs between \$2 billion to \$8 billion per year. The EPA estimates that public water systems spend an additional \$200 million per year just to remove excess nitrate to meet federal drinking water standards. A small community's nominal investment in implementing and adhering to a source water protection plan can avoid substantial remediation costs.

This is the only statewide local community-based initiative ensuring environmentally progressive local land-use decisions without the controversy and bureaucracy of regulatory programs. Currently there are 55 full-time specialists employed to organize and assist rural communities, farmers, and other land-use interests in the implementation of source water protection plans including nonpoint source (runoff) protection practices in agriculture regions. State Associations provided \$598,962 of non-federal matching funds to carry out this initiative from December 1, 2023 to November 30, 2024. This initiative allows the people who benefit from environmental protection to take responsibility for achieving it—ensuring its success and eliminating local controversy. Through comprehensive planning efforts that identify potential threats to the water supply, communities proactively maintain local sources of safe and clean water. Additionally, by developing and implementing a source water protection plan, communities can help minimize the future need for expensive upgrades to treatment facilities.



**NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION**  
**FY2026 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY**

*Name of program:* **EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Technical Assistance**

*Appropriations bill:* Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

*Senate subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*Senate subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*House subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*House subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*Agency:* Environmental Protection Agency

*Appropriations account:* Environmental Programs and Management

*Authorization:* Safe Drinking Water Act (42 USC 300j-1(e))

*FY2026 President's budget request:* TBD

Funding History

FY2021	\$21,700,000
FY2022	\$25,700,000
FY2023	\$30,700,000
FY2024	\$30,700,000
FY2025	TBD

***FY2026 request: \$35,000,000***

The National Rural Water Association requests report language, consistent with the House FY2025 reported bill (see below) appropriating \$35,000,000 under this account to provide \$26,000,000 dedicated to the technical assistance activities as prescribed under the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Act. Small and rural communities rely on local/on-site technical assistance and training for compliance with federal EPA regulations, avoiding EPA fines, and operating drinking and wastewater supplies.

**Report Language:** *Environmental Protection: National Priorities.*- The bill provides \$35,000,000. The Committee directs that funds be used for a competitive grant program for qualified non-profit organizations to provide technical assistance for improved water quality or safe drinking water, adequate wastewater to small systems, or individual private well owners. The Agency shall provide \$26,000,000 for Grass roots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act, for activities specified under Section 1442(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-1(e)(8)). The Agency is directed to provide funding to the most qualified and experienced non-profit organizations in providing technical assistance to small water systems and to issue the grant awards from this program on an annual basis.

**EPA Technical Assistance Justification: Enact the House's FY2025 reported level of \$35,000,000 and follow the Congressional intent of Public Law 114-98 for FY2026.**

**EPA Technical Assistance Authorization:** The President signed the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act into law (Public Law 114-98) on December 11, 2015. The House of Representatives unanimously passed the bill on November 30, 2015 and the Senate on June 9, 2015 (also unanimously). The authorization was modified in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (H.R.3684, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) to ensure the funding is used in the most beneficial manner for rural and small communities.

The purpose of the Act is to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) follow Congressional intent in administering directed appropriations to assist small and rural communities to comply with federal environmental mandates. The Act authorizes the EPA to provide technical assistance to small and rural communities to assist them with: (1) compliance with the myriad of federal regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act; (2) operation and maintenance of their water utilities; and (3) public health protection through the supply of safe public drinking water.

**Technical Assistance Demand:** Small and rural communities often have a difficult time, due to their limited customer base and technical capacities, providing safe water and complying with federal standards. This is compounded by the fact that small and rural communities often have lower median household incomes and higher water rates compared to larger communities. As a result, the cost of compliance is often dramatically higher per household.

The vast majority of U.S. drinking water supplies are small; 91% of community water systems serve a population of fewer than 10,000 people. Some communities are so small they rely on volunteers to operate their drinking water supply. Small communities in violation of the federal rules are subject to \$25,000 per-day civil penalties. We are urging Congress to fully fund the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act portion at \$26,000,000 and ensure funding is limited to qualified, experienced technical assistance providers to effectively serve the needs of rural utilities

**Experience:** Since 1977, NRWA has assisted small and rural communities in providing safe drinking water and ensured access to the expertise of an experienced, trustworthy technician. This technical assistance provides for efficient system operation and maintenance and affordable compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act mandates. Small and rural communities are struggling under new federal regulations, complex funding program applications, and continuing mandatory operator training requirements. Recent EPA awards for this initiative do not adequately address the needs of small and rural communities that need help as soon as possible.

**NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION**  
**FY2026 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY**

*Name of program:* **EPA Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance**

*Appropriations bill:* Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

*Senate subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*Senate subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*House subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*House subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*Agency:* Environmental Protection Agency

*Appropriations account:* State and Tribal Assistance Grants Account

*Authorization:* America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (section 4103), "Technical Assistance for Treatment Works"

*FY2026 President's budget request:* TBD

Funding History

FY2021	\$18,000,000
FY2022	\$20,000,000
FY2023	\$27,000,000
FY2024	\$25,500,000
FY2025	TBD

**FY2026 request: \$27,500,000**

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) requests \$27,500,000, consistent with the FY2025 Senate reported bill, to fund section 4103 America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018. This competitive grant program provides small and rural communities with the technical assistance necessary to improve water quality, operate and maintain public wastewater treatment utilities, assist with permitting, comply with federal Clean Water Act regulations and apply for federal funding under the Clean Water State Revolving Funds. Small and rural communities strive to ensure quality wastewater stays in compliance—this initiative provides them with the technical resources to do so.

**Bill Language:** \$27,500,000 shall be for grants under section 104(b)(8) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1254(b)(8)).

**Report Language:** The Agency is directed to issue awards on an annual basis to the most qualified and experienced non-profit organizations necessary to provide quality uninterrupted training and technical assistance. The Agency is directed to allocate funds to grantees within 180 days of enactment of this Act.

**EPA Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance Justification: Enact the FY2025 Senate reported level of \$27,500,000 for section 4103 of America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 in FY2025**

**EPA Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance:** This technical assistance authorization, section 4103, "Technical Assistance for Treatment Works," was included in America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, and signed into law by the President on October 23, 2018.

Small and rural communities have more difficulty affording public wastewater service due to lack of population density and lack of economies of scale. This challenge is compounded by the fact that rural communities have lower average median household incomes and often have higher rates of poverty. Likewise, rural communities have a much more challenging time complying with federal Clean Water Act permits and operating complex wastewater treatment systems due to the lack of technical resources and expertise in small communities. While most rural communities have fewer resources, they are regulated in the exact same manner as a large community - and often operating similarly complex treatment systems that are smaller in scale but no less sophisticated to operate and troubleshoot. Many small communities may only have one (or one part-time) operator with multiple duties (not just wastewater treatment) - while a large community may have a team of technical experts including engineers, chemists, and highly trained operators - all as part of their full-time staff.

Many small and rural communities are currently struggling to comply with the EPA sewer permits (i.e. federal National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits), experiencing issues with inflow and infiltration of their collection systems, meeting Clean Water Act ammonia standards, biochemical oxygen demand standards, new nutrient standards, stormwater regulations and changing permits due to implementation of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) regulations.

This recent law provides direct on-site assistance to communities to support the efficient operation of their wastewater utilities and ensure compliance with all the federal regulations under the Clean Water Act. Funding and implementation will allow communities to comply with the federal Clean Water Act requirements, potentially save thousands of dollars, prevent the hiring of consultants to comply with the Clean Water Act and limit exposure to civil penalties. Instead of a "must" mandate from the federal government, this provision will provide small and rural communities with "how-to" guidance for cost-effective compliance with the federal government's Clean Water Act.

**NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION  
FY2026 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY**

*Name of program:* **National Water and Wastewater Operator Apprenticeship Program**

*Appropriations bill:* Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies

*Senate subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*Senate subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*House subcommittee Chairman:* TBD

*House subcommittee Ranking Member:* TBD

*Department:* United States Department of Labor

*Agency:* Employment and Training Administration

*Appropriations Account:* Training and Employment Services

*FY2026 President's budget request:* TBD

**Apprenticeship Grant  
Program Funding History**

FY2021	\$185,000,000
FY2022	\$235,000,000
FY2023	\$285,000,000
FY2024	\$285,000,000
FY2025	TBD

***FY2026 request: \$20,000,000 set-aside within the Apprenticeship Grant Program***

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) requests \$20,000,000 for a national water and wastewater operator apprenticeship program to be funded by the available resources within the Apprenticeship Grant Program account.

**Bill Language:** \$20,000,000 shall be for national water and wastewater operator industry workforce training through apprenticeship programs registered with the Office of Apprenticeship of the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor or a State apprenticeship agency recognized by the Office of Apprenticeship pursuant to the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the "National Apprenticeship Act"; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

**Report Language:** The Committee directs the Secretary to make \$20,000,000 in grant funding available for a nonprofit organization working with community water systems to establish, implement, expand, and administer registered apprenticeship programs consistent with the National Guideline Standards of Apprenticeship for Water and Wastewater System Operations Specialists to address nationwide shortages of qualified drinking water and wastewater operators, especially in rural America.

**DOL Rural Water Workforce Initiative Justification: Provide the FY2025 House reported level of \$20,000,000 for a national water and wastewater operator apprenticeship program.**

NRWA, State Rural Water Associations, USDA, DOL, EPA, and local rural water utilities are collaborating successfully to establish the first nationally recognized Registered Apprenticeship Program for water and wastewater system operators, while creating jobs in rural America. In July 2024, NRWA achieved a significant milestone by securing \$7,631,873 in DOL competitive grant funding to support the development and expansion of these vital rural water apprenticeships. As of January 2025, 34 State Rural Water Associations have completed the rigorous process of obtaining federally approved Registered Apprenticeship Programs and are now attracting, training, and retaining the next generation water workforce with over 573 apprentices enrolled and over 337 have completed their apprenticeship as of December 31, 2024.

To bolster this effective initiative, Congress “urged” the Secretary of Labor to make funding available for the NRWA Registered Apprenticeship Program in the FY2024 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act and the FY2025 DOL House Appropriations report includes a set-aside directing the Secretary of Labor to invest \$20 million:

*The Committee directs DOL to make \$20,000,000 in grant funding available to establish, implement, expand, and administer registered apprenticeship programs consistent with the National Guideline Standards of Apprenticeship for Water and Wastewater System Operations Specialists to address nationwide shortages of qualified drinking water and wastewater operators, especially in rural America. (page 13)*

To continue the growing, successful NRWA Apprenticeship Program, we also request a \$290 million funding level for the Apprenticeship Grant Program account, the same as the Senate’s FY2025 reported level, and \$20,000,000 for a national water and wastewater operator apprenticeship program to be funded by the available resources within that account.

Safe and effective water utility management is vital to rural America and the nation. There are currently over 50,000 community water supplies in the country, 91% serve populations of 10,000 or less. Employment data indicates up to 50% of this workforce will leave the water industry within the next 10 years. A vast majority of community water systems have been unable to attract, train and retain the next generation workforce due to the lack of an identifiable career path coupled with low salary levels and population density. Rural water utilities need a pipeline of skilled workers to ensure clean and safe water for the public and to maintain the water infrastructure necessary to keep service areas economically viable. These operators serve as public health officials and are often the only person responsible for complying with all the applicable federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act regulations and for supplying the small community with safe drinking water and sanitation every second of every day. Water and wastewater systems will be empowered to leverage workforce development activities including an identifiable career path and a modern, systematic apprenticeship model with this funding for the first time.

# Wisconsin Rural Water Association

## Impact on Wisconsin by Congressional Districts

### DISTRICT 7

Legend:
Blue - Waterworks Assistance
Green - Energy Efficiency
Yellow - EPA Water Case Studies
Teal/Aqua – Source Water Assistance
Light Brown – Wastewater Assistance

Contact Date	System Name	System Contact	Position	System Connections/ Energy Savings	Total Contact Time	Savings to System
12/12/23	Neillsville Waterworks	Kyle Friemoth	Operations Specialist	765 W / 765 WW	2.50 hrs.	\$4,500
<p>Notes: WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow met with Public Works Director Luke Friemoth and Operations Specialist Kyle Friemoth to discuss the functions and applications of GIS mapping. The system needed capital improvements, asset management, historical data tracking, and lead and copper inventory to be integrated within the GIS mapping program. Dan was able to import previous GIS coordinates for the city's water system. He also provided detailed training for building map layers, layer calculations, layer filters, and new user accounts. Multiple maps with multi-functioning layers were also set up. During the on-site visit, Dan was able to import existing GIS points and teach the functionality of GIS mapping. Through the service provided, WRWA saved the City of Neillsville \$4,500 for GIS program set up and training.</p>						
12/27/23	Roberts Waterworks	John Bond	Public Works Director	600 W / 600 WW	1.0 hour	\$40,000
<p>Notes: Mr. Bond asked Kay Curtin, WRWA Wastewater Technician, for assistance with a problem at his wastewater plant. A very thick slime resembling glue had been developing in the first reactor and was interfering with the dissolved oxygen and oxidation reduction potential probes and operations. Kay examined the slime under a microscope at the plant and suspected a nutrient deficiency. Kay suggested operational changes to the treatment to better provide food for the system. Mr. Bond did as Kay asked, and the amount of slime had subsided within one day. WRWA's actions prevented severe problems with the plant and especially the sensitive algae system, saving the city approximately \$40,000.</p>						
1/30/24	Eagle River Waterworks	Mike Sanborn	Utility Manager	96,500 kWh		\$5,780 annually
<p>Notes: WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician performed an energy efficiency assessment follow-up for Eagle River's wastewater system. He compared the previous assessment done in 2019 to the current rates and kWh's used in the system for the year 2023. The 2019 assessment recommended adding a VFD to each of the 50 hp air blowers for the aerobic digester. In 12/2022, the city decided to replace the entire blower assembly with newer efficient blowers and VFDs. According to the data, the blowers alone have outperformed the old equipment by approximately 3800 kWh, saving approximately \$385 each month. This comes out to a savings of \$4,625 per year. All improvements and process changes since 2019 have saved approximately 96,500 kWh per year and \$2,634 in savings, when adjusted for the increase in energy costs. WRWA's recommendations have saved Eagle River approximately \$5,780 annually.</p>						
2/6/24	Prentice Waterworks	Dale Andreae	Public Works Director	242 W / 242 WW	2.50 hrs.	\$11,000
<p>Notes: Todd Weich, WRWA Circuit Rider, was contacted by Dale Andreae to assist in performing leak detection within the municipality. Todd arrived on-site and met with Dale and Kyle Steliga, Assistant Fire Chief, to listen to hydrants in the system with the leak detection listening device. About halfway through the distribution system, noise was detected on a hydrant. Todd explained they needed to listen to the services nearby to pinpoint the leak. They narrowed the leak down to an adjacent street. The leak detection continued and was completed. On 2/9/24, Dale called Todd stating there was another leak, and water was running down the road. At 8:00 a.m., Todd arrived and assisted with locating two different water main breaks. The leak with water running down the road was able to be isolated by turning off a valve because it was at a dead-end, preventing the excavation of the road. The second leak was located and repaired on the other side of the village. WRWA saved the Prentice \$11,000 for leak detection services and preventing road damage.</p>						
2/8/24	New Auburn Waterworks	Ardith Story	Village Administrator	210 W / 183 WW	2.25 hrs.	\$1,000
<p>Notes: WRWA Wastewater Technician Tony Roche visited New Auburn and met with Ardith Story. The village had hired two operators in the last six months but both operators quit and left the village without an operator. Tony showed Ardith</p>						

how to operate the collection system and the pond system. He was able to show her the tasks that needed to be performed to keep the village in compliance. He showed her how to read flow meters, document daily flows, collect samples, and operate the blowers at the pond system. WRWA's services saved the village \$1,000 in consultant fees.

2/12/24	Curtiss Waterworks	Larry Swarr	Operations Specialist	31,401 kWh		\$5,578 annually
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Notes: An energy efficiency follow-up assessment was done by WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler for Curtiss Waterworks. Matt compared his current findings with the previous assessment done in 2019. New VFDs were recommended. WRWA's services would save Curtiss an additional \$5,578 annually.

2/22/24	Three Lakes Sanitary District					\$30,000
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Notes: Three Lakes Sanitary District received a wellhead protection plan from WRWA which protected 231 acres and saved the district \$30,000 in engineering fees.

2/27/24	Hurley Waterworks	Gary Laguna	Operation Specialist	726 W / 0 WW	6.50 hrs.	\$4,600
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Notes: WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by the City of Hurley to assist in finding a significant water leak. Equipped with a portable subsurface leak detector, Dan met with Gary Laguna. They began testing hydrants and looking for leaks. Dan identified one hydrant that was leaking and another leak near an abandoned water main. After further investigation, it was determined the valve leading to the abandoned water main was leaking past the valve seat. They exercised the valve and continued to listen to the valve. After many attempts, Gary was able to stop the water's movement past the valve seat. Dan suggested Gary exhume the valve in the spring, remove the valve and t-pipe, and replace it with a section of pipe. WRWA saved Hurley \$1,200 for leak detection and \$3,400 for lost water charges.

3/13/24	Crandon Waterworks	Ross Crum	Director of Utilities	617 W / 617 WW	2.25 hrs.	\$5,000
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Notes: WRWA Wastewater Technician Jesse Hass was contacted by Ross Crum to assist with some reports the DNR was requiring. Ross had just received his permit and was required to complete a Land Management Report for the city's seepage cells. He called Jesse and asked what steps he would need to take to complete the Land Management Report. Jesse was able to obtain a couple completed reports from a few municipalities and scheduled a visit with Ross. Jesse stated it would be possible for Ross to complete the report utilizing the templates rather than hire a consultant. Jesse said he would stop back in a month to go over the completed reports before Crandon sent them to the DNR. WRWA saved the system approximately \$5,000, the charge to have a consultant complete the report.

3/19/24	Iron River					\$30,000
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Notes: Iron River received a wellhead protection plan from WRWA which saved the town \$30,000 in engineering fees.

5/17/24	Maine Waterworks	Chris Jensen	Wastewater Superintendent	60 W / 75 WW	2.25 hrs.	\$60,000 annually
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Notes: WRWA Wastewater Technician Jesse Hass was contacted by Chris Jensen to discuss Maine's wastewater treatment plant. The Village of Maine had been tasked with absorbing the now defunct Village of Brokaw's utility. The Village of Maine met with Jesse to discuss options for the wastewater plant. Jesse recommended operating the plant and finding a new operator. The village wanted to shut down the plant and truck the waste to a neighboring community, which Jesse felt would be more expensive. The village decided to haul their wastewater to Merrill and hired Chris shortly after the plant had shut down. Jesse and Chris met every few months to discuss the positives and negatives of hauling the waste and later discussed the process for starting the plant back up. Chris started the plant back up in early spring and has been in contact with Jesse about the process and possible savings so far to the village. Jesse and Chris know this isn't a long-term fix. The plant needs upgrades and repairs but will save expenses in the short term. The village was spending over \$20,000 a month hauling their sludge to Merrill. With WRWA's advice, the village put their plant back online and the overall estimated savings are \$5,000 to \$10,000 a month.

5/30/24	Ladysmith Waterworks	Travis Vollendorf	Wastewater Operations Specialist	1637 W / 1093 WW	2.50 hrs.	\$1,000
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Notes: WRWA Wastewater Technician Tony Roche visited Ladysmith and assisted the wastewater operator with measuring the sludge blanket depth and collecting sludge samples in the wastewater lagoon system. They successfully measured the sludge blanket depth and collected sludge samples to keep the village in compliance with their wastewater discharge permit. WRWA's assistance saved the village approximately \$1,000 in consultant fee.

6/18/24	Glidden Sanitary District	Todd Schmidt	Dept. of Public Works	43,802 kWh		\$7,384 annually
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Notes: An energy efficiency assessment was done by WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler for Glidden Sanitary District. Matt suggested equipment repairs to increase efficiency and installation of a solar array which would



benefit the office/shop, and water system, along with turning in tax exempt form for the water tower. Implementing WRWA's recommendations would save Glidden approximately \$7,384 annually.

6/20/24	Hatley Waterworks	Brian Janikowski	Wastewater Operator	268 W / 120 WW	2.50 hrs.	\$10,000
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Notes: WRWA Wastewater Technician Jesse Hass was contacted by Brian Janikowski to develop a chloride reduction plan to remain in compliance with the DNR. Jesse and Brian looked through wastewater treatment plant data and organized pertinent information to put into a report. They discussed what to include in the plan to send to the DNR. Jesse provided Brian with a few chloride reduction plans from other communities to use as a reference. He met with Brian a few weeks later to go over the finished plan before it was submitted to the DNR. After finishing the chloride reduction plan, Brian asked Jesse to help develop a sludge management plan as well. Jesse obtained reports from a few other communities, and they sat down and finished a sludge management plan as well. WRWA's services saved the village approximately \$10,00 for not having to hire an engineering firm to do the chloride reduction plan and sludge management plan.

7/15/24	Mercer Sanitary District	Rick Graser	Superintendent/Lead Operator	220 W / 220 WW	1.75 hrs.	\$1,800
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Notes: Dan Wundrow, Circuit Rider for WRWA, was contacted by the Mercer Sanitation District to assist in locating a significant water leak. Dan traveled to Mercer equipped with a portable subsurface LD-12 leak detector and met with Rick Graser. Dan and Rick started looking extensively at known problem areas in the distribution system. They worked together to identify an area of concern and isolated the area into three residential services. After further investigation and pressure testing, Dan identified which service and the leak's location on the service line. WRWA's services saved Mercer \$1,800 for leak detection and empowered Rick with new skills.

7/16/24	New Auburn Waterworks	Joe Koteris	Wastewater Operations Specialist	210 W / 183 WW	3.0 hrs.	\$1,000
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Notes: WRWA Wastewater Technician Tony Roche visited New Auburn on 7/16/24 to assist the wastewater operator with measuring the sludge blanket depth and collecting sludge samples in their aerated lagoon system. The operator and Tony successfully measured the sludge blanket depth in the wastewater lagoon system and successfully collected sludge samples to keep the village in compliance with their wastewater discharge permit. WRWA's services saved the village approximately \$1,000 in consultant fees.

7/22/24	Mercer Sanitary District					\$30,000
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Notes: Mercer received a wellhead protection plan from WRWA which protected 124 acres and saved the district \$30,000 in engineering fees.

8/14/24	Dallas Waterworks	Adam Davis	Water Operation Specialist	118 W / 118 WW	3.0 hrs.	\$2,800
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Notes: WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by the Village of Dallas for his expertise in hydrant repairs. He traveled to the Village of Dallas and met with Adam Davis on 7/23/24. Adam stated that seven of their fire hydrants were inoperable. Dan and Adam examined the seven fire hydrants and developed a parts list. Adam ordered the needed parts, and on 8/14/24, Dan met with Adam to teach and assist him in repairing the upper section of the fire hydrants. During the training, Dan noticed some of the fire hydrants had been repaired in the past. He pointed out some of the repairs to Adam and gave guidance on how the previous repairs were completed incorrectly. After several repairs, Dan then observed Adam complete the repairs needed on the next fire hydrant. WRWA's services provided education and technical assistance on fire hydrant repairs and maintenance, saving the village \$2,800.

8/26/24	Hayward Water Utility	John McCue	Public Works Director	103,201 kWh		\$10,858 annually
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Notes: WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler performed an energy efficiency assessment for Hayward's water and wastewater operations. For the wastewater treatment operations, Matt suggested they install new synthetic material filter elements to lower suction restriction, maintain particulate removal, turn in tax-exempt forms, and reduce VFD speed by 2 Hz at the main lift station. For the water treatment operations, Matt suggested increasing the VFD speed at Well 7 from 52 to 53 Hz. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Hayward would save \$10,249 annually in their wastewater operations and \$609 annually in their water operations.

9/6/24	Chelsea Sanitary District	Sue Jensen	Bookkeeper	0 W / 12 WW	1.50 hrs.	\$1,000
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Notes: WRWA Wastewater Technician Tony Roche was contacted by Sue Jensen to assist with a problem they were experiencing in needing lower phosphorus levels in their treatment plant effluent to stay in compliance with their permit regulations from the state. Chelsea Sanitary District uses a recirculating sand media filter for treatment. Tony met with Chelsea's staff to observe plant operations and to formulate a strategy to lower effluent phosphorus concentrations. He advised staff to maintain the media filter by pulling weeds and rotating filter beds to prevent the buildup of

contaminants. He also suggested increasing their effluent recirculation ratio to achieve greater phosphorus treatment and removal. WRWA's services saved Chelsea \$1,000 in engineering firm fees.

9/12/24	Glen Flora					\$30,000
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Notes: Glen Flora received a wellhead protection plan from WRWA which protected 62 acres and saved the village \$30,000 in engineering fees.

9/20/24	Florence Utility Commission	Eric Lorensen	Water/Wastewater Lead	6,570 kWh		\$966 annually
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Notes: WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler performed an energy efficiency assessment for Florence water and wastewater operations. Matt suggested changing air filter media to a high efficiency media for the wastewater system. For the water system, he suggested increasing the speed on the VFD at Well 4 to 58.6 Hz. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Florence would save \$573 annually for their wastewater operations and \$393 annually for their water operations.

9/24/24	Star Prairie Waterworks	Nate Licht	Public Works Director	170 W / 170 WW	11.0 hrs.	\$4,500
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Notes: WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by the Village of Star Prairie to assist with a 10-year tower drain down and inspection. On 9/23/24, Dan traveled to Star Prairie to meet with Nate Licht, and the Utilities Specialist, Mike Hesselink. Nate had never embarked on completing a full tower drain-down inspection. They took time to overview the system, strategize where pressure relief valves should be placed for optimal operation, record pressures at various places throughout the water system, and discuss the operating process that would take place the following day. On 9/24/24, Dan provided hands-on technical assistance with the tower drain down. During this time, he provided a plethora of training for Nate and Mike. Dan reviewed the DNR requirements for full draw-down inspection, addressed missing sample taps, mitigating the risk of water hammer, identified pressure zones, and provided mathematical equations tailored for their system, refilling procedures, and sampling requirements. WRWA's services saved Star Prairie \$4,500 by not hiring a private consultant.

9/25/24	Hawkins Waterworks	Matt Boehmer	Public Works Director	188 W / 188 WW	2.75 hrs.	\$2,500
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Notes: WRWA Circuit Rider Todd Weich was contacted by Matt Boehmer to assist him in performing hydrant flushing. Todd met with Matt and John Burkman. The village had been going through a water upgrade and had to start chemical addition of polyphosphates to sequester the iron and manganese. Todd explained the process of flushing the fire hydrants to remove sediment. They went over the detailed water distribution map to determine what hydrants would be key hydrants to flush. Todd determined there were several hydrants that could be flushed based on location and distance from the water tower to optimize volume and pressure to move the sediment out of the pipes. They started flushing key hydrants in a systematic way. After flushing a few of the hydrants, it was clear the process was working. Todd explained the process might take several days or weeks to completely remove the sediment and for the polyphosphate to start working correctly. Matt estimated WRWA saved the village about \$2,500 instead of hiring an outside firm.

10/9/24	Colby Waterworks	Al Raatz	Water Superintendent	640 W / 640 WW	1.50 hrs.	\$3,000
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Notes: WRWA Circuit Rider Todd Weich was contacted by Harland Higley, the Director of Public Works, to assist him in performing leak detection. Todd met with Harland and Al Raatz, the water superintendent. Al told Todd he had a leak within his water system and had it narrowed down to 3 blocks. Todd explained that the next step to leak detection was to go out into the system and listen to some hydrants with the LD-12 leak detection listening device. WRWA provided the equipment needed for the testing. Todd and Al narrowed the leak down to one block, then correlated the leak. The correlation gave a spike of the location of a possible leak. Todd provided training on how to use the LD-12 acoustic listening device on the roadway to confirm the leak. Harland estimated WRWA saved the city about \$3,000 dollars if the leak could not have been found, which would have meant digging up a larger area of a brand-new roadway.

10/17/24	Dallas Waterworks	Adam Davis	Water Operation Specialist	118 W / 118 WW	3.75 hrs.	\$45,000
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Notes: Dan Wundrow, WRWA Circuit Rider, was contacted by the Village of Dallas and informed that 12 of their 27 hydrants were inoperable. He met with Operation Specialist Adam Davis. During the first initial on-site visit, Dan informed Adam of the general review of the fire hydrants, the do's and don'ts of maintenance, the parts list, and breakdown drawings. They fixed several of the fire hydrants and Dan advised Adam of the parts needed to fix the remaining hydrants. Once the lower assembly parts arrived, Dan returned, and he guided Mr. Davis through the process of repairing the lower assembly. Adam showcased his prior knowledge by effectively disassembling and reassembling the upper section of the hydrant independently. WRWA's services provided valuable education and technical assistance on fire hydrant repairs and maintenance, saving the village \$45,000. This cost-saving was crucial, as the village had initially planned to dig up and replace six hydrants this year and another six next year.

11/18/24	Unity Wastewater Treatment Plant	Joe Geiger	Wastewater Operations Specialist	0 W / 127 WW	2.25 hrs.	\$1,000
Notes: WRWA Wastewater Technician Tony Roche visited the Village of Unity to assist the operator with measuring the sludge blanket depth and collecting sludge samples for their aerated lagoon system. Tony and Joe successfully measured the sludge blanket depth in the wastewater lagoon system and collected sludge samples to keep the village in compliance with their wastewater discharge permit. WRWA's saved the village \$1,000 for not having to hire a consultant.						
11/27/24	Edgar Waterworks	Bill Tess	Water Superintendent	415 W / 415 WW	3.25 hrs.	\$5,000
Notes: On 11/26/24, Bill Tess contacted WRWA Circuit Rider Todd Weich to assist him in pinpointing a leak. Bill had narrowed down the leak to one block and would close some valves. Todd arrived early on 11/27/24 and met with Bill. They decided to dig last night in several areas to see if they could locate the leak, but the leak was not located. Todd explained the equipment needed for a correlation of the area. Todd and Bill placed the leak detection equipment on distribution valve and fire hydrant. The correlation gave a spike of the location of the leak. Todd also used the LD-12 acoustic listening device on the roadway to confirm the leak. Unfortunately, the location was about 80 feet from where they started digging the night before. The crew moved their excavating equipment to the new location Todd marked. Valves were closed so they would not lose water pressure or drain the water tower completely, but despite their efforts, the water system did lose enough pressure to cause a water boil notice. Bill estimated WRWA saved the city about \$5,000 after locating the correct spot to dig and told Todd he would wait for WRWA before digging next time.						

## **Renee Koback**

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**From:** Roger Secrist <rsecrist@florenceutilitieswi.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 26, 2024 2:16 PM  
**To:** Renee Koback  
**Subject:** Thank you!

Hi Renee,

I would like to express my appreciation to Matt Rettler and the entire WRWA organization for all the help and training that is offered along with the loaner equipment program. Florence is a small community that could never have accomplished the task such as the most recent Energy assessment that Matt had conducted or be able to purchase equipment that is offered for us to use in order for us to be able to do our jobs safely and efficiently. The top notch training that is offered to us is second to none in our opinion. So again Florence would like to thank you all for the great things that WRWA offers to communities like ours!

Thank you

Roger Secrist  
Utility Manager



PO Box 109  
501 Spring Ave  
Florence, WI 54121  
(715) 528-3330

Please note my new email address, [rsecrist@florenceutilitieswi.gov](mailto:rsecrist@florenceutilitieswi.gov)

## **Renee Koback**

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**From:** Kay Curtin <kaycurtin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 12, 2024 11:10 AM  
**To:** Chris Groh; Renee Koback  
**Subject:** Thank you note

**Kay Curtin**  
**715.340.8827**

**Hey Kay, I just heard you are retiring. I want to thank you for all the many times I've been at your trainings or just talking to you. The knowledge you have is unmatched. You will certainly be missed. Also, I want to tell you that you are not allowed to retire!!!! Hopefully I will get to talk to you before you are officially retired Thanks for everything, Nate from the Village of Star Prairie**



Indian Health Service  
129 North Brown Street  
Rhinelander, Wisconsin 54501-3450  
715-365-5145  
FAX: 715-365-5113

February 23, 2024

Kelly Thomas, Technical Assistance Director  
Wisconsin Rural Water Association  
350 Water Way  
Plover, WI 54467

Dear Mr. Thomas,

As the Tribal Utility Consultant for the Indian Health Service (IHS) to the Wisconsin Tribes for over 15 years, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the work conducted by Mrs. Brooke Klingbeil in her position as an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) contracted Wastewater Technician through the Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA). In the short time she has been providing assistance to the tribes, she has gained the respect of the tribal utility staff with her knowledge of wastewater treatment and testing and has proven her integrity by providing timely, quality deliverables.

Brooke approached me with an enthusiastic drive to provide technical assistance to the tribal wastewater utilities. An area of great need for the tribal wastewater systems is in the development and maintenance of administrative documents such as Emergency Response Plans. Brooke pulled together several templates to develop a format that incorporates not only the necessary emergency response information to meet the EPA and IHS recommendations, but also lends to the development of an asset management program. She completed the data collection and population of the template for a simple utility in a matter of days and provided a high quality draft to the Utility for review in 10 business days, a very impressive feat!

She has also been an invaluable resource for wastewater treatment and laboratory procedures. During site visits to the Oneida Nation and to the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Brooke fully enveloped herself into the wastewater treatment operations of the labs and treatment processes. She has extensive knowledge of lab procedures, reporting, and treatment process adjustment and is willing the help the utilities in tasks from developing Standard Operating Procedures to recommending process adjustments to increase treatment efficiency. She is very hands on and her sincere desire to assist the utilities in evident in her communication with the tribal staff.

Brooke has an infectious personality and displays a high level of respect for the native cultures. The tribal staff trust her and appreciate the resources she brings to the table. These attributes coupled with the provision of timely, high quality deliverables has made Brooke an invaluable asset for the Wisconsin Tribes and I truly appreciate the services she provides.

Sincerely,

Shane Hoffmann, PE  
Wisconsin Tribal Utility Consultant

## Renee Koback

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**From:** Chris Groh  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 03, 2024 9:02 AM  
**To:** Seth Petersen  
**Cc:** Renee Koback  
**Subject:** Fw: WRWA

Good job Seth. Always good to get a thank you from the board president!

Rene, We can use this for a thank you in the journal?

*Chris Groh*  
**Executive Director**  
**Wisconsin Rural Water Association**  
[cgroh@wrwa.org](mailto:cgroh@wrwa.org)  
(715) 340-2055

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**From:** Dean Bergstrom <[dean@cmutility.com](mailto:dean@cmutility.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 3, 2024 8:49 AM  
**To:** Chris Groh <[CGroh@wrwa.org](mailto:CGroh@wrwa.org)>  
**Subject:** WRWA

Hi Chris, I want to thank WRWA and Seth especially, for the training that was provided to two of our employees who took the water training classes for water distribution and ground water. Seth even stopped by our offices and went over the material again with my guys before they took the tests at the WRWA Convention. The guys are confident they did well.

Thanks again!!

**Dean Bergstrom**  
Utility Manager  
**Office:** 715-822-2595  
**Cell:** 715-671-8072  
**Email:** [dean@cmutility.com](mailto:dean@cmutility.com)



August 15, 2024

Ms. Tammy Baldwin  
US Senate


RE: Support for USDA -RD Program

Ms. Baldwin,

I write this letter to show my support for the USDA-Rural Development program. RD's loan/grant program has allowed the City of Eagle River complete multiple projects over the years to extend and upgrade the City's sewer and water system. The combination of the grants and 40-year, low interest loans made it more feasible to replace aging infrastructure and install new infrastructure bringing in new businesses and housing to our area, while keeping water and sewer utility costs as low as they can be.

Ms. Baldwin, I urge you to continue supporting the USDA-RD program to allow the same funding for future upgrades to enhance the growth of our city along with other cities like ours. Thank you for what you do for Northern Wisconsin!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Sanborn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Sanborn, Utility Manager  
Eagle River Light & Water Utility  
Eagle River, WI  
715-479-8121



August 15, 2024

Mr. Ron Johnson  
US Senate

RE: Support for USDA -RD Program

Mr. Johnson,

I write this letter to show my support for the USDA-Rural Development program. RD's loan/grant program has allowed the City of Eagle River complete multiple projects over the years to extend and upgrade the City's sewer and water system. The combination of the grants and 40-year, low interest loans made it more feasible to replace aging infrastructure and install new infrastructure bringing in new businesses and housing to our area, while keeping water and sewer utility costs as low as they can be.

Mr. Johnson, I urge you to continue supporting the USDA-RD program to allow the same funding for future upgrades to enhance the growth of our city along with other cities like ours. Thank you for what you do for Northern Wisconsin!

Sincerely,



Mike Sanborn, Utility Manager  
Eagle River Light & Water Utility  
Eagle River, WI  
715-479-8121

August 15, 2024

Mr. Tom Tiffany  
7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Wisconsin  
US House of Representatives

RE: Support for USDA -RD Program

Mr. Tiffany,

I write this letter to show my support for the USDA-Rural Development program. RD's loan/grant program has allowed the City of Eagle River complete multiple projects over the years to extend and upgrade the City's sewer and water system. The combination of the grants and 40-year, low interest loans made it more feasible to replace aging infrastructure and install new infrastructure bringing in new businesses and housing to our area, while keeping water and sewer utility costs as low as they can be.

Mr. Tiffany, I urge you to continue supporting the USDA-RD program to allow the same funding for future upgrades to enhance the growth of our city along with other cities like ours. Thank you for what you do for Northern Wisconsin!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Sanborn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Sanborn, Utility Manager  
Eagle River Light & Water Utility  
Eagle River, WI  
715-479-8121

## Renee Koback

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**From:** Ken McNinch <ken.mcninch@scc-nsn.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 10, 2024 10:53 AM  
**To:** Renee Koback; Brooke Klingbeil  
**Subject:** RE: WRWA Appreciation letters

Good Morning

This Email is support of the WRWA and the amazing employees that have helped me in the past. So far I have only had the pleasure of meeting Brooke Klingbeil and Todd Weich but I will tell you they are amazing. Having Todd to help with the water side and Brook on the wastewater side. Its nice knowing that I have help and help can be on site within a few days or less. Its nice having the technical help too, Because I am not an advanced computer person. Brook has helped me so much this summer with my emergency response plan and my wastewater assessment. I just can't even begin to explain. But she is a treasure. I work on a small Rez and I only have one coworker to run 2 departments. We try are best but having that extra help is awesome. I truly hope this great organization keeps up the great work cuz us small departments really appreciate it.

Ken McNinch  
Public Works Director  
Sokaogon Chippewa Community

**From:** Renee Koback <RKoback@wrwa.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 6, 2024 7:18 AM  
**To:** Renee Koback <RKoback@wrwa.org>  
**Subject:** WRWA Appreciation letters

Warning - Sent from outside the organization. Be cautious with links or attachments.

**Did you get some exceptional help from our EPA, Wastewater, Energy Efficiency and Source Water Programs or the WRWA Office?**

We are looking for thank you letters from our members for support of these programs. These letters go to our funding agencies and state/federal agencies to show how we help our systems in Wisconsin. Your support keeps our state and other states across the US (and your neighbors that may also need these services) funded and able to render any help that you may need.

Thank you for your help on this.

Have a great weekend!!

Renee J. Koback  
WRWA Member Services Coordinator  
(715) 344-7778  
[rkoback@wrwa.org](mailto:rkoback@wrwa.org)  
[www.wrwa.org](http://www.wrwa.org)

**OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
VILLAGE OF NEW AUBURN**

130 Elm St E | PO Box 100 | New Auburn, WI 54757-0100  
Phone: 715-237-2223 | Fax: 715-237-2334 | [www.newauburn-wi.com](http://www.newauburn-wi.com)

October 3, 2024

The Village of New Auburn (Village) had one of the greatest experiences with the Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) in late 2023 through mid-2024. We are a small community with approximately 570 residents after our recent annexation, and as many communities can also echo, with limited budgets. Due to some unknown circumstances that occurred prior to the arrival of the current staff with the Village, both Public Works staff members left employment with the Village. This trend continued with the retirement of the long-standing part-time staff member in the office and the resignation of my predecessor.

Prior to my arrival the Village Board were able to retain the services of two bright individuals for the vacated Public Works positions. Both individuals had zero municipal experience, and thereby, no water or wastewater utility experience. Thereby, neither of them had the respective required training, experience or certificates to manage the Village's utilities. The Village was also able to retain an experienced Clerk and new Treasurer with appropriate financial, accountant and public service minded individuals to guide the development and growth of the Village as a whole.

WRWA staff worked closely with all the Village's new staff and retained consultant to ensure the Village did not have any preventable violation of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) regulations. Furthermore, if we had a violation, the WRWA was there to assist us with the reporting requirements and steps to ensure to alleviate and correct the situation. In addition, WRWA provided low-cost training opportunities throughout the State with locations near our community for reduced travel burdens. Other small communities that I have worked for have relied heavily upon WRWA for similar situations and training needs.

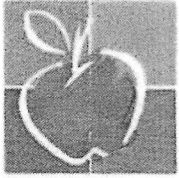
It is these services that are paramount for all small communities in the State of Wisconsin and would be an unfillable void if they were not here to assist us all when needed or required.

Sincerely,



Bradley J Hanson

Village Administrator-Clerk-Deputy Treasurer



**GAYS MILLS**  
**W I S C O N S I N**

VILLAGE OF GAYS MILLS  
16381 STATE HWY 131, STE. 1  
GAYS MILLS, WI 54631

October 25, 2024

Susan Poe  
Wastewater Program Manager  
National Rural Water Association  
2915 S. 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Duncan, OK 73533

I am writing on behalf of the Gays Mills Village Board and our Public Works Department regarding your recent request for letters of support for the Wisconsin Rural Water Association.

In July of 2024 our Director of Public Works choose employment elsewhere. A current employee stepped up and needed immediate assistance for Wastewater. Tony Roche, WRWA Wastewater Technician, was able to provide assistance to us with multiple site visits to our wastewater treatment plant along with assistance by phone and email. Tony has helped with recommendations on purchasing equipment, lab supplies, and also has provided instructions on performing wastewater testing and sampling.

The village appreciates the service and continued support that is provided by Wisconsin Rural Water Association in order to operate our wastewater treatment plant efficiently.

Sincerely,

Harry Heisz  
Village President



Brooke,

Thank you for helping the Village  
of Bay City with my Landspreading  
Plan and the WPOES permit application.  
Your help was greatly appreciated,

Chris Zeman

Director of Public Works

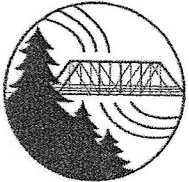
## Renee Koback

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**From:** Candice Grunseth <clerk@GILMANWI.GOV>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 13, 2024 8:37 AM  
**To:** Chris Groh; Renee Koback  
**Subject:** Thank you

I just want to send this email telling you guys how much help Brooke Klingbeil has been to our small community! She has been reviewing our past permits for Wastewater and sat in on our meeting with the DNR. She is knowledgeable and very easy to engage with. I don't feel stupid calling or emailing her my questions as she is always willing to look into things. I don't know where we would be at right now in the DNR publication process without Brooke's help. I have had a rough few years and this past year there has been more and more work with trying to get grants and save money for our small village. Without Brooke's assistance throughout the whole process I really don't know where we would be! I really appreciate all of her time on the permit process and trying to get us up to date with our ordinances. THANK YOU BROOKE and THANK YOU WRWA for allowing her to help small communities! We appreciate each person from WRWA that has helped us!  
Take care  
Candice

*Candice Grunseth, WCMC  
Village Clerk  
Village of Gilman  
715-447-8650  
[clerk@gilmanwi.gov](mailto:clerk@gilmanwi.gov)*



## Renee Koback

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**From:** Roger Secrist <rsecrist@florenceutilitieswi.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 26, 2024 2:16 PM  
**To:** Renee Koback  
**Subject:** Thank you!

Hi Renee,

I would like to express my appreciation to Matt Rettler and the entire WRWA organization for all the help and training that is offered along with the loaner equipment program. Florence is a small community that could never have accomplished the task such as the most recent Energy assessment that Matt had conducted or be able to purchase equipment that is offered for us to use in order for us to be able to do our jobs safely and efficiently. The top notch training that is offered to us is second to none in our opinion. So again Florence would like to thank you all for the great things that WRWA offers to communities like ours!

Thank you

Roger Secrist  
Utility Manager



PO Box 109  
501 Spring Ave  
Florence, WI 54121  
(715) 528-3330

Please note my new email address, [rsecrist@florenceutilitieswi.gov](mailto:rsecrist@florenceutilitieswi.gov)



**Renee Koback**

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**From:** website@wrwa.org  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 04, 2024 1:13 PM  
**To:** WRWA  
**Subject:** New submission from General Contact Form

**Name**

Ryan Ellis

**Employer**

mellen municipal utilities

**Email**

[utilities@cityofmellen.org](mailto:utilities@cityofmellen.org)

**Phone**

(715) 681-0609

**I would like to receive training notifications via email**

Yes

**Comments Or Question**

I just want to say thank you to my circuit rider, Dan Wundrow for answering my calls and helping with valve box lowering as well as bringing me the Data Loggers every summer.

I would like to also give a big thanks to Tony Roche for helping me with my Discharge permit application. The WRWA team is a life saver to new and inexperienced operators.

Thank You,

Ryan Ellis  
OIC- Mellen Municipal Utilities

## Renee Koback

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**From:** John McCue <pw3@centurytel.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 05, 2024 1:12 PM  
**To:** Renee Koback; Chris Groh  
**Subject:** City of Hayward Thanks You

I would like to thank WRWA so much for your hard work on the numerous projects the City of Hayward's had over the past year The Water and Sewer Utility Electrical Assessment from Matt Rettler. Dan Wundrow's Water Technical advice and tool loaner program. Tony Roche's Wastewater Technical advice and training.

I am really proud of the effort WRWA put into these projects and wanted to give you a shout-out for all your hard work. It's great to see how much you've grown as an association and team members, and it was my pleasure to work with WRWA on these projects.

Keep up the great work! I don't know what we would do without your help/service!

Thanks John

--

John McCue  
Public Works Director  
City of Hayward  
15889 W 3rd Street PO Box 969  
Hayward, WI 54843  
Phone: 715-634-4612  
Fax: 715-634-5868  
[pw3@centurytel.net](mailto:pw3@centurytel.net)  
[www.cityofhaywardwi.gov](http://www.cityofhaywardwi.gov)

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## **Three Lakes Sanitary District No. 1**

P.O. Box 325

Three Lakes, Wisconsin 54562

I am writing to express our appreciation for all you do, not just for Three Lakes, but for all your members.

If not for your organization, small districts, like ours, would struggle to survive. From your support staff in Plover helping with administrative questions, and keeping us up to date on pending legislation, and rule changes. Your Technical Conference, as well as the Outdoor Expo, create a chance for members to meet vendors we otherwise might not, as well as touching base with current vendors for new ideas.

Andrew was outstanding in helping us with, not only our Wellhead Protection Plan, but also a draft of our Wellhead Protection Ordinance. Andrew was instrumental in heading us in the correct direction and making sure we completed our task in a timely fashion.

Your Circuit Rider program is unequalled in professionalism and the knowledge they provide. They are always available by phone to answer questions, and in person when extra help is needed. Helping us with leak detection is one of the areas that still leaves me in amazement. Neither Ed Hendezel nor Todd Weich have been off the mark by more than a bucket of an excavator bucket. When our local repair contractor knows they have a locate by Rural Water, they are very quick to respond.

Helping with setting up our GIS Mapping was another remarkably easy process when Todd came to demonstrate and help us begin.

The use of loaner equipment provided by you is an additional area which allows access to equipment small districts would never be able to afford, or own, but desperately need. Making this equipment available, and having personnel to deliver it, and demonstrate operation, is extremely invaluable.

Please find our enclosed donation to your loaner equipment fund and keep up the good work.

See you in March.

Again, Thank You.

Three Lakes Sanitary Dist. #1

Dear Representatives,

The City of Owen would like to Thank WRWA for all their services through the 2024 year. Todd Weich always answers his phone when called. He is always here when we have issues with our water system.

WRWA now has Brooke, an amazing EPA Wastewater Technician on board now and Tony their Wastewater Technician This will also help small towns in the future.

Its is sure nice knowing we are not alone in this world when we have any kind of issues. Its also nice when they all just check in and just stopping to update us on upcoming EPA or DNR stuff coming down the chain.

Thank You all at WRWA for everything you all do. We could not do our best job without you all!!

Chad J Smith  
Director of Public Works  
City of Owen.



## Village of Almena

131 Soo Ave. East - PO Box 277  
Almena, WI 54805-0277  
715-357-6600

December 10, 2024

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**RE: Training and Technical Assistance for Small Public Water Systems to Achieve and Maintain Compliance with the SDWA**

To Whom It May Concern,

Your U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant program in PY24 has played an integral role in providing training and technical assistance (T/TA) for our small public water system in Almena by achieving and maintaining compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Your drinking water Training Specialist, Seth Petersen with WI Rural Water Association, provided comprehensive guidance to ensure our system can attain and maintain financial and managerial capacity.

Specifically, this important program assisted us to complete our lead service line inventory and send out customer notification letters. Furthermore, your Specialist assisted in providing advanced training to our operators, giving them confidence, and better equipping them with the knowledge to ensure the system maintains quality drinking water while remaining in compliance with regulatory requirements.

This service is invaluable to our community and communities like ours who lack the resources to ensure the protection of safe drinking water and public health. The continuation of this program for our system into PY25 and beyond is imperative, as there are additional needs, such as providing T/TA to help continue to update our lead service line inventory and find funding to confirm and remove lead service lines in Almena that can be addressed through this program and cannot be resolved by a community with a population of 704 and Median Household Income (MHI) of \$44,000.

Thank you for your continued support in assisting us with our small public water system. Your T/TA continues to improve water quality for the residents of Almena.

Sincerely,

Alan Gabe, Village President

To Whom it may concern,

I'm a new trustee to the Village of Tony. I moved to this area 15 months ago. Never been a member of any village, have ran mfg. companies all my life. Since moving I was "voluntold" to be on the board. Since being on board, I have discovered many things. I am currently working becoming the water/wastewater operator. So extremely new to everything. Seth and his team have been to me life savers. Getting me information for everything. Also being very patient with my dumb questions. With his help we will make this village better.

Jeffrey W Hurlebaus  
Village of Tony

December 11, 2024

Chris Groh

Wisconsin Rural Water Association

RE: Assistance with updating our Emergency Response Plan

Hello Chris,

I am writing this letter to express my gratitude for the assistance our circuit rider, Todd Weich had given us in updating our Emergency Response Plan. With this task and like so many things Wisconsin Rural Water Association does for us is priceless. From assisting with plan updates and all the training WRWA provides, our small water and wastewater utility could not keep up with the demands without WRWA.

Thank you for all you do for us!!

Sincerely,

Mike Sanborn, Utility Manager  
Eagle River Light & Water

**Renee Koback**

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**From:** Julie Benson <jbensonsandist@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 8:58 AM  
**To:** Renee Koback  
**Subject:** Re: Rural Water E-News 12/4/2024  
**Attachments:** image003.jpg; image005.png; image006.jpg; image001.jpg; image002.png

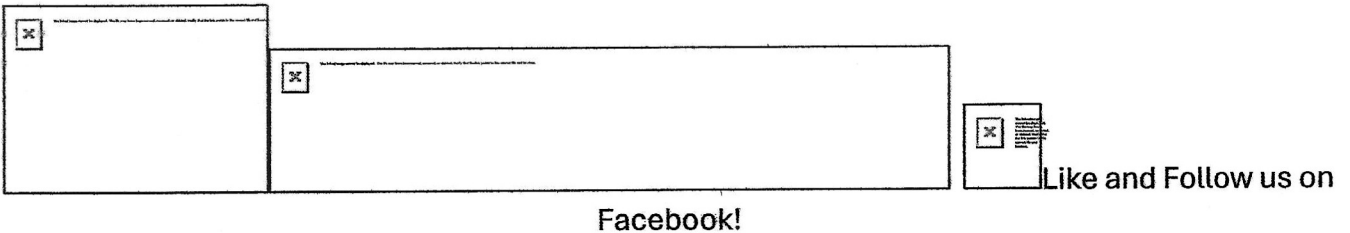
Hello Renee,

I wanted to write to you and let you know that Tony Roche came to our office to help me study for my wastewater general basic test and I did pass that test! It was immensely helpful, Tony is a great teacher and explained things very well. I was very appreciative that he was able to come to me to help me. Big thanks to Tony!!!

Have a good day!

Julie *Lakeland Sanitary District No 1*

On Wed, Dec 4, 2024 at 11:41 AM Renee Koback <[RKoback@wrwa.org](mailto:RKoback@wrwa.org)> wrote:



## **RURAL WATER E-NEWS**

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..... **12/4/2024**

**We always jokingly say our only "charge" for our service is a thank you letter.** Have you written one to us for a service one of our staff helped with? All these thank you notes go to our representatives in Washington DC and help us fund USDA Rural Development and our services. Please and thank you for a thank you!