



Association of Environmental Authorities of New Jersey

Wednesday, March 17, 2021



Congratulations to the 2021 WAVE Award Winners

The Association of Environmental Authorities bestows Wave Awards to recognize excellence in the public water, wastewater, recycling, and solid waste sector in New Jersey. The awards were presented at the spring utility management conference last week. Congratulations to this year's winners:

Wave Achievement Award

Michael A. Gianforte, Two Rivers Water Reclamation Authority

Michael A. Gianforte, Executive Director of the Two Rivers Water Reclamation Authority, was honored with a Wave Achievement Award for his efforts to change how authorities handle enterococcus limits. The TRWRA developed a procedure and a sampling apparatus that once approved, all Ocean Dischargers will benefit from enhanced assurance of compliance and will be able to reduce the discharge of chlorine to the environment.

Individual Wave Achievement

Christopher Kelly, Middlesex County Utilities Authority

Chris Kelly is the Operations Superintendent of the Middlesex County Utilities Authority, supervising 44 employees and served as such throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and bringing with him a diverse background of knowledge in both operations and maintenance. Mr. Kelly has demonstrated time and again that he is up to the challenge, no matter the obstacles, and that's why he earned this Individual Wave Achievement award.

Michael Facendo, Middlesex County Utilities Authority

Michael "Mickey" Facendo is the Solids Superintendent/Assistant Operations Superintendent for Middlesex County Utilities Authority, supervising 24 employees. At the onset of the pandemic, the MCUA developed a health and safety response plan that included multiple stages. These efforts make Mr. Facendo worthy of an Individual Wave Achievement award.

Life Member

Stephen R. Blankenship, Hamilton Township Municipal Utilities Authority

Since 2000, Mr. Blankenship has served as the Executive Director/Chief Engineer for the Hamilton Township MUA and currently serves as the licensed operator of record for the HTMUA's Water Distribution System and Wastewater Collection System. Mr. Blankenship has been an active member in AEA for over 13 years and has served on the Board of Directors for more than 5 years, as well as the legislative and water committees.

Up and Comer

Brian Brach, Manasquan River Regional SA

Brian Brach's efforts on behalf of AEA have been significant and numerous. He is the epitome of an Up and Comer – someone who hit the ground running when he became involved in AEA. He is a positive force in our association, and we are most fortunate to have him involved.

Kevin Whitney, Atlantic County Utilities Authority

Kevin Whitney is being nominated for an Up and Comer Award because he has made a material and constructive contribution to AEA in the past several years. We see the type of skills relating to information and data management that he has as being increasingly important in the years to come and his demonstrated willingness to share those skills with the members of AEA makes a significant contribution to the life of the association.

Outstanding Associate Member

Christine Ballard, CDM Smith

Chrissy Ballard is well deserving of an Outstanding Associate Member award. She has been key in continuing the strong tradition of support that CDM Smith has given AEA over many years. AEA succeeds through relationship building within the organization and outside of it, and it also succeeds by providing helpful member service. For that and more, she earns this award for Outstanding Associate Member.

Best Management Practices

Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission

Every day, hundreds of millions of gallons of human and industrial waste are sent through the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's (PVSC) complex underground wastewater system. In an effort to make PVSC's treatment process more efficient and to continue to successfully maintain one of the oldest wastewater treatment plants in the United States, PVSC launched an enterprise Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping platform.

Warren Township Sewerage Authority

Over the past several years, the Warren Township Sewerage Authority (WTSA), led by Spencer Pierini, P.E., Executive Director, has been aggressively planning and implementing Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) projects throughout their sewer collection systems. These efforts earned WTSA this Wave Award for Best Management Practices.

Forward Thinking Award

Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission

The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) owns and operates one of the nation's largest wastewater treatment facilities, and recently took on the task of increasing the plant's overall wet weather treatment capacity. Based on their studies, a new facility is anticipated to be placed into operation in 2026, making this a clear example of forward thinking in the industry.

Township of Ocean Sewerage Authority

The Township of Ocean Sewerage Authority's 50+-year old offshore outfall was showing signs of significant distress and due to aggressive marine environment, the asset was quickly reaching the end of its useful life. The refurbishment and

replacement project utilized the latest technologies to do repair vital infrastructure for lower cost and less public disruption, minimizing land disturbance and beach impacts.

Mutual Aid

Water and Wastewater Sector Security and Resiliency Working Group

The Working Group is comprised of representatives of water and wastewater utilities from throughout New Jersey, and representatives of federal and state regulatory agencies related to the water and wastewater sector. The mutual aid and sharing that occurs at the Working Group meetings made a huge contribution to this excellent performance, and thus earns them this Wave Award.

Virtual Workshop April 7th for Commissioners: Protecting Authorities from Cyber Attack

A few days before the 2021 Super Bowl, a hacker unsuccessfully penetrated a utility that provided water to the stadium where the Big Game was being played. A sharp-eyed employee caught the intrusion and averted injury to the people of that community.

Even so, the incident is a reminder that protection against cyber attacks is as essential as the security fence around the treatment plant.

Commissioners are invited to join AEA for a virtual workshop on this topic to be held Wed., April 7 at 6 p.m. The speakers will be IT/cyber experts. They will brief the commissioners on the AEA IT Committee, the current types of threats and the benefits to the authority of a well-funded cyber security program.

While this virtual event is being offered especially for commissioners, authority staff may participate. Registration is required. Please email Karen Burris, karen@aeanj.org, indicating "Commissioner Workshop" in subject line.

EPA Urges Making Water a Career of Choice

The EPA has prepared a Compendium of Water Workforce Case Studies from Across the Country. Jobs in the water sector provide stable employment, meaningful careers, technical training, and important technical skills (including using innovative technologies), and a chance to make a real difference in our communities across the nation.

Each case study is different, but they all share a dedication to the health and safety of our communities. The dedicated water workforce professionals at the utilities highlighted in this compendium demonstrate that a career in water means making a difference in people's lives every day.

EPA believes these case studies will provide valuable and useful information to help utilities across the water sector support and sustain their most precious resource—their workers.

[View the full document here.](#)

Visit AEA's Career Center

Job listings for the public water / wastewater industry. AEA members may submit listings for free. [Check our job listings now.](#)

NEWS LINKS

AEA gathers news relevant to our industry and archives it in one convenient place for you. [Go there now.](#)

Association of Environmental Authorities | 2333 Whitehorse-
Mercerville Road, Unit 2, Mercerville, NJ 08619 | (609) 584-1877 | [Join Us](#) |
<https://www.aeanj.org/>

