



**American Water Works  
Association**

**MEMO**

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The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water <sup>SM</sup>

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**To:** RMSO V Attendees  
**From:** Susan Franceschi, Section Services Representative  
**Date:** April 27, 2006  
**Re:** **RMSO V Highlights**

Thanks to the Iowa Section for hosting the regional meeting and making arrangements for the reception on Friday evening. I hope you found the meeting to be both informative and enjoyable. Attached you will find the compiled meeting notes.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (303) 347-6205 or by e-mail at [sfrances@awwa.org](mailto:sfrances@awwa.org). Thank you all for your support and encouragement during my first regional meeting. I enjoyed seeing all of you and look forward to seeing you at the next section or AWWA event!

Attachment

cc: Nilaksh Kothari  
Tom Curtis  
Gary Sullivan  
Mark Grace

## **Comments – Pre-Meeting**

Representatives from each of the five Region V sections attended the regional meeting and were able to mingle extensively prior to the start of the meeting. The attendees' name tents were placed randomly at different tables so that representatives from more than one section sat at each table. Each table represented groups for the activity and breakout sessions.

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Nilaksh Kothari warmly welcomed the attendees and invited them to introduce themselves and to state their expectations for the meeting. The Region V attendees expressed interest in:

- Learning about national activities
- Learning from other sections
- Meeting other volunteers
- Learning how to meet challenges of small sections
- Learning how to increase YP involvement
- Learning how to increase membership
- Sharing new ideas
- Networking
- Learning about different programs and services

## **State of the Industry**

Each group was asked to discuss the challenges the region experienced on the topics highlighted in the State of the Industry Report. The following is a summary of the concerns and possible solutions each group expressed:

- Group 1:
  - Challenges: Aging workforce; aging infrastructure; regulatory environment; new challenges in maintaining adequate water quality
  - Solutions: Training; raising level of opportunities; revolving fund; new funding sources; education and training
- Group 2:
  - Challenge: Aging workforce and redistribution of population
  - Solutions: Better recruiting; more YP involvement; emphasis on differentiating the water profession from other professions
- Group 3:
  - Challenges: Advancement in analytical capabilities outpacing environmental science; workforce challenges
  - Solutions: Look to AWWA to provide information and education on science; technology use to ease workforce shortages; partnering with other utilities for joint use of capabilities, e.g., billing, customer service
- Group 4:
  - Challenges: Aging workforce
  - Solutions: Adequate salary and wages; more focus on YP and students

## **Succession Planning for a Vital Workforce in the Information Age**

This topic, presented by Dave Fox for the Diversity Committee, contained information addressing workforce issues. In the question and answer period, an attendee asked for information on the specifics of the participants in the AwwaRF study. That information was not available at that time, however, the answer to that question is as follows:

The survey sample consisted of over 410 of the largest water utilities in the Water:\Stats database and the 160 utilities that are WERF subscribers—representative of the larger water and wastewater utilities. Four contract operators were also included in this survey. Responses were received from 126 utilities. The utilities spanned the geographic and size spectrums and included water only, wastewater only, and joint utilities. Of the 126 responses, 18 or 14% were from investor-owned utilities.

## **Legislative/Regulatory Update**

Tom Curtis provided a relevant and informative presentation on the important topics in the regulatory and legislative arena. Because of his intense knowledge in this area, members of the group used this opportunity to ask questions regarding the nature of specific regulations and legislative trends as these issues applied to their situations.

## **Membership**

John Hays presented a lively and challenging discussion of membership. He focused on the changes following the Association's change to the Plus+Points program. He announced Membership Marketing's intention to begin a campaign to maximize utilities' opportunities to add additional active members. He explained that increasing the number of additional active members would result in membership growth. Nilaksh Kothari presented a membership challenge based on similar challenges issued in other regions. He challenged all Region V sections to meet the AWWA Strategic Plan's 3% membership increase goal. Under the terms of the challenge, the losing section would pay for a reception at the 2007 RMSO. If all sections meet the 3% goal, AWWA will pay for the reception. Section leaders promised to discuss this challenge with their Boards. Any section wanting to participate in the challenge should email Susan Franceschi (sfrances@awwa.org) by May 31, 2006. The participants and target numbers and dates will be announced by June 5.

## **Section Management Committee**

The Section Management Committee portion of the agenda on Saturday morning featured an Education Listening Safari facilitated by Mark Grace. Each section participated and contributed excellent feedback. A summary and report of the Listening Safari will be sent to each participant at a later time. Results from the Listening Safari will be discussed at the Summer Workshop.

## **Future Location for RMSO – Region V**

The sections engaged in a discussion about the future location of the regional meetings for this region. Representatives from North Dakota recommended that the meeting be held in a location such as Las Vegas. They reasoned that flights to Las Vegas are cheaper than flights to other locations throughout the region, because of competition among low-cost carriers for volume business. In addition, Las Vegas is a location that offers a variety of socializing options, and it offers an attractive weather alternative to cold weather climates. They also proposed a meeting that would avoid the weekend. Section members inquired as to AWWA's position on the matter. AWWA is neutral about the idea, but it presents no inconvenience to Section Services to accommodate these requests. Section Services wants to facilitate a time and location that will best suit the needs of the section officers. The section leaders committed to discussing these issues within their sections and presenting Section Services with the results of their discussions.