

California

WATER JOURNAL

Spring 2026

calruralwater.org

PAGE 7

**Text Alert System Puts
Training Announcements
In Your Hands**

PAGE 12

**How Much Knowledge
Walks Out with Your
Retirements?**

PAGE 25

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▶ April 27–30, 2026 • Caesars Republic Lake Tahoe

PAGE 19 – Registration Form



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The California Rural Water Association, an affiliate of the National Rural Water Association, is a nonprofit organization of rural water and wastewater systems. CRWA is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in small communities by providing training, technical assistance, and representation to public water and wastewater treatment utilities, while maintaining environmental integrity.

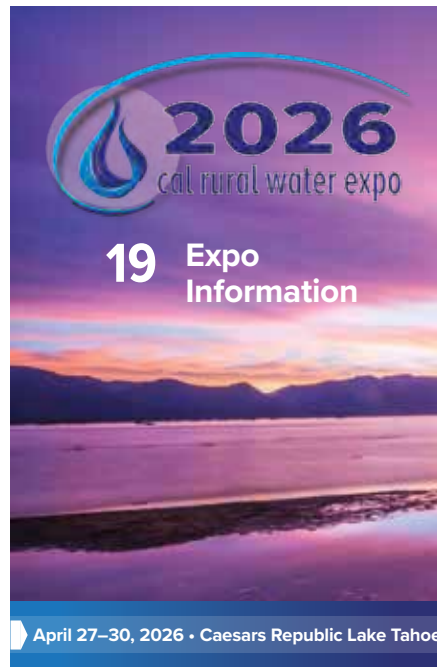
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

California Water Journal Spring 2026, Vol. 46

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE page 4

TECHNICAL

• Trenchless Technologies for Pipeline Construction and Rehabilitation..... page 8

FINANCIAL

• Rural America Relies On Rural Development page 14

MANAGERIAL

• Carbon Reduction and Grid Resilience page 16

ALSO LOOK FOR

- CRWA Reaffirms Commitment to Technical and Training Assistance in the New Year..... page 6
- Building a More Resilient California with the Santa Ana River Watershed..... page 6
- Text Alert System Puts Training Announcements in Your Hands... page 7
- 2026 Expo Information page 18
- Insurance Corner page 24
- Training Corner..... page 25
- Preferred Provider..... page 27
- Product Spotlight..... page 28

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS page 30

Financial Viability for Rural Communities: A Quality-of-Life Issue, Part 3



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By Dan DeMoss

This is the last installment of our look at financial viability for rural community structure. If you're looking for specific information in the Prop 218 process, there are some helpful resources online, or you can always contact our office. We have written numerous articles and advisories on the Prop 218 process and are happy to share that information with you. In general, if you follow the basic guidelines suggested in this article, your Prop 218 process will go much more smoothly.

The last part of this series is very important and provides a good road map in anticipation of the two most asked questions in the process of raising rates and ensuring the financial viability of your utilities. The following two questions need to be able to be answered by utility board members, management, and staff.

1. Why are you raising our rates, and how much will it cost?

The answer should not be "because we need the money." That's a common response and typical in pressure situations like public meetings or public comment areas in a board meeting. Although this answer is probably true, the answer to this question needs to be thought out and presented in a format or manner that informs and delineates the issues.

Preferably, you will want to have answered this question before it is even asked in an open meeting.

The answer or reasons for the increase needed in the system's rates are often obvious to those involved, so sometimes an in-depth or thought-out answer isn't really prepared in advance. Many times, I see the question answered with the reason being "because we are doing a water or wastewater improvement project and we need more money to pay for the improvements." This statement leads to more "How come?" and "Why?" questions.

An appropriate, informative answer may go something like this when you're addressing the public at a meeting:

"As you all know, we have battled discolored water and staining, along with chlorine taste and odor issues. These issues are caused by higher levels of iron and manganese in the water to the point where we are frequently exceeding the Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) regulatory requirements. While at current levels it's an aesthetic issue and does not currently pose a public health threat, the amount of public water quality complaints we routinely get and the number of exceedances of the MCLG prompted the district to apply for a grant. We received

\$2.8 million to design and construct a treatment plant to treat/oxidize iron and manganese and filter/remove it from the well water.

This is great news for the community, but the district will need to fund the ongoing annual operations and maintenance costs of the treatment facility that we build. This is the reason we are meeting here today to ensure that you understand the district's position and financial commitment needed to fund the routine costs for the operations and maintenance of the plant, the increase in operational certifications for staff, and the mandatory monitoring required. This creates the need for this rate increase, requiring us to raise the water rates \$6 per month for the standard 3/4-inch residential meter with an increase of \$1.50 per 1,000/gal on the usage rate.

The revenue created by this increase will go directly to the operations and maintenance of the system utility, funding the increased cost for chemicals, ongoing staff training, annual repair and replacement costs, and the costs associated with upskilling the current operations staff/group to ensure they are trained and certified to meet state regulatory requirements for the plant's operation."

This type of approach accents the positive (\$2.8 million grant) while explaining the financial realities of getting the water treatment plant and providing the answers to the questions of "How come?" and "How much?"

2. When will the rate increase be effective and/or implemented?

This question often indicates that the community is beginning to understand the reasons behind the rate increase and its expected outcomes. While they may not welcome the change, there is growing recognition that the adjustment is essential for the district's or city's long-term financial stability.

It is essential to prepare a comprehensive implementation plan for the rate increase that can be presented in a clear and coherent manner to the public you serve. Rate increases are generally implemented over a five year period, with annual adjustments based on a minimum percentage that is reasonable, well justified, and aligned with current inflation rates or an applicable Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The following is a typical rate implementation plan:

BASE RATES

Customer Type: Residential
Number of Connections: 342

Current Rate	Proposed Base Rates				
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
\$80.50	\$85.00	\$86.70	\$88.43	\$90.20	\$92.01

USAGE RATES

Customer Type: Residential
Current Minimum Amount of Cubic Feet: N/A
Current Rate Per 100 Cubic Feet: N/A

Current Rate	Proposed Usage Rates (Per 100 Cubic Feet)				
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
N/A	\$1.25	\$1.28	\$1.30	\$1.33	\$1.35

I would encourage all of you to review your specific issue and begin planning and educating the public on the changes needed to keep the utility compliant and financially viable. Capital improvement planning and asset management are essential responsibilities for every utility, regardless of size. [CWJ](#)

Dan DeMoss is the Executive Director of the California Rural Water Association.

If your project start-up is six months or a year out, then your rate implementation timelines should reflect the project timelines.

If your utility is facing financial challenges related to capital improvements or compliance needs, please contact our CRWA staff for assistance with rate development and Prop 218 procedures.

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CRWA Reaffirms Commitment to Technical and Training Assistance in the New Year

As California's rural communities continue to navigate evolving regulatory requirements, aging infrastructure, and workforce challenges, the California Rural Water Association (CRWA) is entering the new year with renewed energy and a steadfast commitment to technical and training assistance for water and wastewater professionals across the state.

For decades, CRWA has been a trusted partner to small and rural water systems, providing hands-on support that meets communities where they are. That mission remains as strong as ever. In the year ahead, CRWA is doubling down on its core promise: ensuring that rural water systems have the knowledge, tools, and confidence they need to deliver safe, reliable water and wastewater services to the people who depend on them.

CRWA's technical assistance program continues to be a cornerstone of its service to members. From on-site troubleshooting and system assessments to regulatory guidance and emergency response support, CRWA's expert staff stand ready



to help systems solve real-world problems in real time. This boots-on-the-ground approach is especially critical for small systems with limited staff and resources.

Looking ahead, CRWA will continue expanding its reach, helping communities proactively address compliance, improve

system performance, and plan for long-term sustainability. The goal is simple but powerful: to make sure no rural system must face challenges alone. If you need any help or assistance, please visit our website and submit your request today. Learn more at calruralwater.org/request-technical-assistance.

Building a More Resilient California with the Santa Ana River Watershed



The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority has been selected as a recipient of the Round 1 Regional Resilience Grant Program, provided

by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR). This new grant program supports planning and implementation projects that strengthen climate change resilience at a regional scale. With the support of the Regional

Resilience Grant Program, Santa Ana River Watershed Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan will be able to develop a community-informed, stakeholder-driven, and implementation-focused Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP) for the Santa Ana River Watershed (SARW). This funding will support:

- Building an energetic and broad-based coalition of key public, private, and community-based stakeholders that includes better representation of disadvantaged, underrepresented, and tribal communities.
- Identifying options that address key social, economic, and regulatory constraints that hinder adaptation strategies.
- Identifying multi-benefit adaptation strategies that reflect the needs and priorities of the communities and provide an equitable distribution of resilience benefits.
- Providing evidence, materials, and content that enables stakeholders to apply for implementation funding.

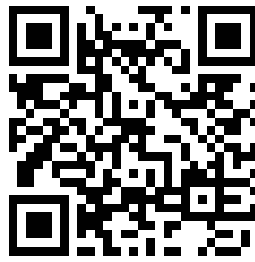


Text Alert System Puts Training Announcements in Your Hands

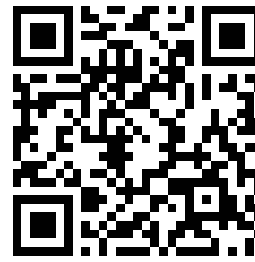


Keyword map by region.

YOU CAN ALSO SCAN THE QR CODE FOR YOUR REGION AND TOUCH "SEND" ON YOUR PHONE.



Northern region.



Central region.



Southern region.

We are currently looking for ways to encourage participation. You never know what they might be, but you can bet they will be fun and creative. If you have an idea, feel free to share via text once you've signed up.

Did you know?

CRWA has a Text Alert System that can be used to put training announcements and other important information directly in the hands of operators and other interested individuals.

The system is broken into three regions: North, Central, and South. This is important for several reasons, but primarily because you do not want to receive training announcements for Yreka when you live in El Centro. Though it is set up in regions, there will be announcements from time to time that will be sent statewide, such as for the annual Expo.

To sign up for alerts, simply text your region's Keyword <space> Sub Keyword to 313131. You will receive a reply confirming your registration. That's it! (See map for keywords by region.)

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Trenchless Technologies for Pipeline Construction and Rehabilitation

By Mohammad Danishyar

Trenchless technology refers to a suite of methods, materials, and equipment used to install, replace, or repair underground pipelines with minimal surface excavation. Trenchless methods limit the work to small entry and exit pits or use underground tunneling and pulling techniques, which greatly reduce disruption to traffic, businesses, landscaping, and the environment. Key benefits of trenchless methods include:

- Minimal traffic and business disruption
- Lower pavement, landscape, and surface restoration costs
- Improved safety due to reduced open trenches
- Ability to cross roads, railways, and waterways without major detours
- Reduced environmental disturbance and smaller construction footprint

Trenchless work can be divided into new pipeline construction and existing pipeline rehabilitation.

TRENCHLESS METHODS FOR NEW PIPELINES

New pipeline trenchless techniques include horizontal directional drilling (HDD), microtunneling, pipe ramming, and impact moling. These techniques install pipelines between two points using small entry and exit pits. A bore is created between the pits, and the new pipe is either pulled or pushed into place.

HORIZONTAL DIRECTIONAL DRILLING

HDD is a steerable method used for installing pipes along a prescribed bore path, typically over long distances (up to 8,000 feet) and capable of installing large diameters of up to 54 inches (see Figure 1). A small-diameter pilot hole is drilled

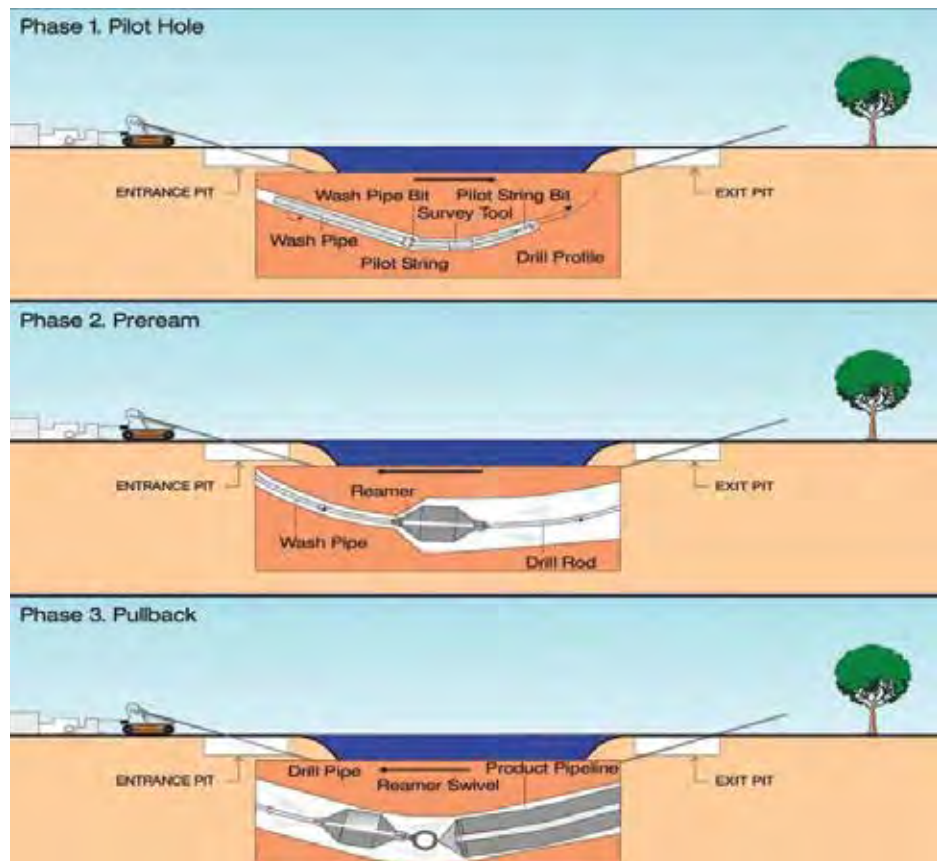


Figure 1: Horizontal Directional Drilling. Retrieved Jan. 9, 2026, from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Horizontal-Directional-Drilling-HDD-construction-procedure-Platosb-2010_fig1_334263806

along the designed path. Once the pilot hole reaches the exit point, a reaming tool is attached and pulled back toward the drill rig, progressively enlarging the hole to the required diameter. The pipeline is attached to the drill string via a pulling head and pulled through the enlarged bore to the entry point.

Criteria:

- Ideal for installing pipelines beneath major obstacles such as rivers, lakes, major highways, and railways.
- Utilized where alignment accuracy and minimal surface disruption are critical priorities, often in environmentally sensitive areas.
- The steerable guidance system provides high accuracy.
- Sensitive to challenging ground conditions such as boulders, cobbles, highly fractured rock, drifting sand, and high water content.
- Potential failure modes include drill path steering errors and bore collapse.



Figure 2: Microtunneling. Retrieved Jan. 9, 2026, from: <https://m-konstruktor.com/steel-moulds-and-concrete-equipment/microtunneling-pipe-steel-moulds>

MICROTUNNELING

Microtunneling uses a boring machine in conjunction with a pipe jacking system (see Figure 2). The process requires a launch shaft and a reception shaft. As the boring machine cutter head excavates the soil, powerful hydraulic jacks in the launch shaft push the boring machine forward. Simultaneously, these jacks push segments of the pipe (typically concrete or steel) into the tunnel directly behind the machine.

Criteria:

- Can install pipes in challenging environments, including below the water table.
- Excellent for projects that require high precise grades.
- Can install large-diameter pipes of up to 10 feet.
- Best suited for unstable, wet, or rocky soils where other methods might fail.
- It is the most expensive trenchless method.
- Limited to straight paths between shafts.

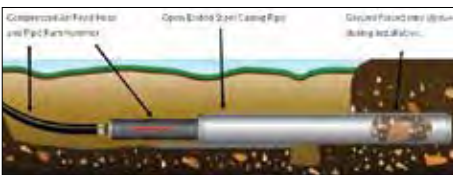


Figure 3: Pipe Ramming. Retrieved Jan. 9, 2026, from: <https://lamstrenchless.com/what-we-do/pipe-ramming/>

PIPE RAMMING

Pipe ramming does not include a boring machine and uses a high-frequency pneumatic hammer to drive a pipe through the ground (see Figure 3). A pneumatic hammer is attached to the rear of the pipe. Compressed air drives an internal piston that delivers rapid, powerful blows, hammering the pipe into the soil like a horizontal pile driver. The pipe is typically installed open-ended. As it advances, it "swallows"

soil rather than displacing them outward. Once a section is driven in, the hammer is removed, a new segment of pipe is welded to the previous one, and the ramming resumes.

Criteria:

- Ideal for installing steel casings where distances are relatively short (up to 200 feet).
- Often used to install an outer sleeve that will eventually house a smaller carrier pipe.

- Excellent for ground containing cobbles and small boulders as the open pipe can simply hammer through or swallow them.
- Once the ramming begins, the path cannot be adjusted.

IMPACT MOLING

Unlike microtunneling or pipe ramming, which remove or swallow soil, impact moling is a soil displacement method. It creates a bore by compacting the surrounding soil outward rather than

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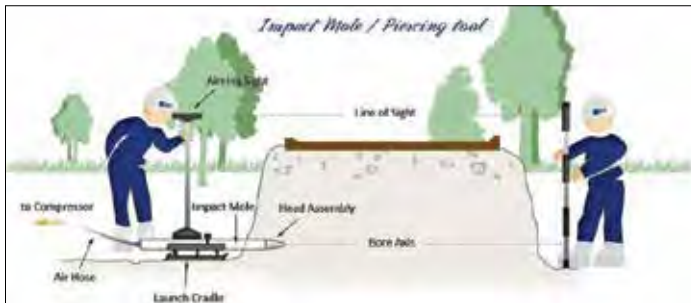


Figure 4: Impact Mole. Retrieved Jan. 9, 2026, from: <https://www.pe100plus.com/PE-Pipes/Technical-guidance/Trenchless/Methods/Installation/Impact-Moling-i1302.html>

removing it (see Figure 4). Small launch and reception pits are excavated at either end of the pipe run. A torpedo-shaped tool (the mole) is placed on a starting cradle and aligned toward the target pit. Compressed air drives an internal piston that hammers the mole forward. The pointed head of the mole breaks the soil and pushes it into the surrounding ground, creating a smooth, compacted tunnel. Once the mole reaches the exit pit, the new product pipe (typically small-diameter PE or PVC) is pulled back through the bore or, in some cases, is towed directly behind the mole during the initial drive.

Criteria:

- Ideal for installing small-diameter service lines (2 inches or less) from a main in the street.
- Best suited for short runs under driveways, sidewalks, and well-manicured landscaping.
- Generally, the least expensive trenchless method for small-scale projects.
- Requires the smallest launch and exit pits.
- Once the mole is launched, it cannot be steered.

TRENCHLESS METHODS FOR REHABILITATION OF EXISTING PIPELINES

Trenchless rehabilitation methods include cured-in-place pipe (CIPP), sliplining, and pipe bursting and are designed to renew and repair existing pipeline without requiring a complete excavation and removal of the old pipe. These techniques extend the service life of aging pipes that may be cracked, corroded, or leaking.

CURED-IN-PLACE PIPE

CIPP involves installing a structural liner inside the existing host pipe, effectively creating a new pipe within the old pipe without excavation (see Figure 5). Access is typically gained via existing manholes or small access pits. A flexible liner tube which has been saturated with a liquid resin is inverted or pulled into the host pipe. Once fully extended, hot water, steam, or UV light is circulated through the liner. The heat or light activates the resin, causing it to harden and cure, forming a rigid, seamless, and corrosion-resistant new pipe (the liner).

Criteria:

- Ideal for rehabilitating deteriorated gravity sewer and storm pipes.
- Can be executed from existing access points (manholes), requiring minimal or no excavation.

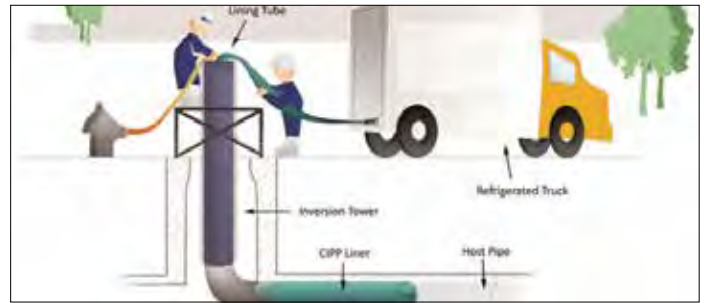


Figure 5: CIPP Installation. Retrieved Jan. 9, 2026, from: <https://www.orcity.org/1831/Methods-Used-for-Sanitary-Sewer-1-1-Repa>

- Can navigate pipe bends and diameter changes better than rigid sliplining materials.
- The liner reduces the internal diameter and capacity of the pipe.
- Not suitable for pipes with large cracks, significant corrosion, or major structural issues.

SLIPLINING

Sliplining involves inserting a new, smaller-diameter carrier pipe into the deteriorated host pipe (see Figure 6). Entry and exit pits are excavated (or existing manholes used) to provide access for inserting the new pipe. Section of the new pipe is pushed or pulled into the host pipe. Once the new pipe is in place, the space between the exterior of the new pipe and the interior of the old host pipe is often filled with cementitious grout or a similar stabilizing material to provide structural support.

Criteria:

- Best used in pipes that have maintained alignment and shape.
- The new pipe is fully structural and designed for a long service life.
- Results in a reduction of the internal diameter and flow capacity.
- Restricted to straight pipe runs and can only accommodate minor bends.

PIPE BURSTING

This method replaces the old host pipe with a new pipe of the same or larger diameter (see Figure 7). At the launch pit, a bursting head is attached to the leading end of the new pipe (typically HDPE). The cable or rods are pulled from the receiving pit, drawing the bursting head through the old pipe. The bursting head fractures the host pipe material outward into the surrounding soil while the expansion cone immediately following the head opens the new bore path. The new pipe is pulled directly behind the expander cone, settling into the newly created bore path.

Criteria:

- Can be used to install a new pipe with a larger diameter than the original.
- Can be used where severe host pipe collapse prevents CIPP or sliplining installation.



Figure 6: Sliplining. Retrieved Jan. 9, 2026, from: <https://www.tuboseal.co.za/>

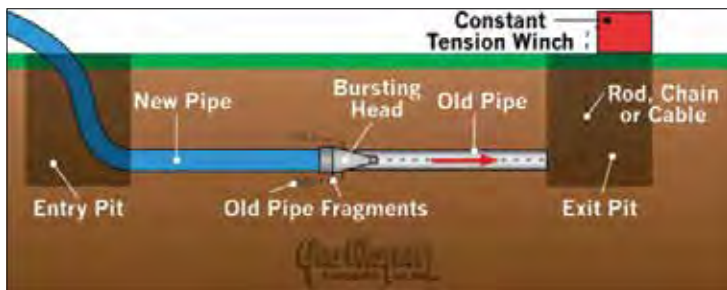


Figure 7: Pipe Bursting. Retrieved Jan. 9, 2026, from: <https://www.genewagnerplumbing.com/pipe-bursting-lining/>

- Effective on pipes made of brittle materials such as cast iron, vitrified clay pipe (VCP), or asbestos cement (AC).
- Pipe bursting is constrained by the existing pipe alignment and cannot be steered.

HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT TRENCHLESS METHOD FOR YOUR PROJECT

Selecting the appropriate trenchless method depends on the specific requirements and constraints of each project. A successful method balances technical, environmental, and cost factors.

Key factors to consider:

- **Project Type:** Whether the work involves new installation or rehabilitation.
- **Ground Conditions:** Soil type and groundwater level.
- **Pipe Diameter and Capacity:** Inside diameter and flow capacity requirements.
- **Pipe Material:** Required pipe material can limit options.
- **Accuracy Requirements:** Some projects require more precise line and grade.
- **Length and Depth:** Long vs. short and deep vs. shallow crossings can limit options.
- **Surface Disruption:** Impact on traffic, structures, and environment.
- **Existing Pipe Condition:** Structural integrity of the host pipe for rehabilitation methods.
- **Cost and Risk:** Construction cost, schedule, and probability of success.

Mohammad Danishyar, EIT, is an Associate Engineer with California Rural Water Association.

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How Much Knowledge Walks Out with Your Next Retirement?

Preserving operational knowledge in rural water systems

By Audi Findley



I write this from two perspectives that increasingly overlap, foremost as a certified water and wastewater operator with more than 25 years of experience, including time spent personally managing utilities, overseeing daily operations, and carrying responsibility for compliance, staff, and system performance.

Second, in my current role as Customer Success Manager at Waterly, where I work directly with hundreds of water and wastewater operations teams across the country. In that role, I see up close how utilities of all sizes are wrestling with the same fundamental challenges—staffing constraints, retirements, overlapping roles, and the pressure to do more with less.

Across those conversations, one issue persistently surfaces: how to preserve the heritage knowledge from experienced operators as people retire, transition roles, or simply get stretched too thin.

Most rural utilities are not short on dedication or expertise. They are short on time—and often on people. When a senior operator leaves, what walks out the door is not just a position but years of accumulated knowledge:

- which readings matter most,

- how seasonal changes affect the system,
- what "normal" really looks like,
- how problems tend to get caught before they become violations.

Historically, that knowledge lived in paper logbooks, personal spreadsheets, file cabinets, or simply in someone's head. For decades, we managed with the available tools of the time, but now those limitations are exposing gaps in operational knowledge that are unacceptable. Today, many systems are discovering that keeping things running smoothly depends less on individual memory and more on whether daily operations are documented in a way that others can understand and build upon.

THE HIDDEN COST OF INFORMAL KNOWLEDGE

In many rural systems, informal processes are a necessity. Operators wear multiple hats. Documentation is often built around what regulators require, not what helps train the next operator.

This creates several risks:

1. Training gaps when new or junior staff inherit tasks without understanding what can go wrong
2. Inconsistent data when readings are recorded differently by different people

3. Compliance exposure when required tasks are completed but not clearly documented
4. Over-reliance on key people when only one person knows "how it's really done"

None of these issues stem from lack of effort. They stem from systems that rely too heavily on individuals to remember, interpret, and piece together information after the fact.

WHY NOW IS THE RIGHT TIME TO ADDRESS IT

For many rural utilities, there are natural reset points throughout the year. Seasonal tasks ramp up. New staff get onboarded. Training schedules are revisited. Regulatory requirements come into sharper focus.

These transitions often bring the realization that we're preparing for the same challenges we faced last year—but with fewer people and more responsibility.

This makes it an ideal time to ask a straightforward question: *If someone new joined tomorrow, could they understand how this system operates by looking at our records?*

If the answer is "only if someone explains it," then the system is relying on word-of-mouth rather than solid documentation.

TURNING DAILY WORK INTO SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Preserving what operators know doesn't require writing manuals or adding new reporting burdens. In fact, the most effective approach is often the opposite: capturing what operators already do, in a consistent and accessible way.



Daily rounds, sampling, inspections, and maintenance checks already represent our best understanding of how a system functions. When these activities are recorded with some structure—including time, location, effects, and what actually happened—they become more than compliance records. They become a living reference for the entire team.

This is where many systems are rethinking how they document routine work:

- Instead of custom forms and notes, tasks follow standard procedures.
- Instead of scattered spreadsheets, data lives in one central place.
- Instead of reviewing logs only during audits, trends are visible year-round.

Some utilities are doing this with internally built tools. Others are using software designed specifically for water and wastewater operations, such as Waterly, which organizes rounds, sampling, and operational data in a single place.

Homegrown systems can work for a while, but many utilities have found they don't age well. One California utility experienced this when an employee, who'd built a sophisticated set of Google Sheets for tracking daily data and reporting, left. The sheets still existed, but the knowledge of how to edit and adjust them walked out the door with him. The system that had worked so well suddenly became a black box.

That utility turned to Waterly as a more stable partner for preserving operational knowledge. Purpose-built platforms offer what DIY solutions can't sustain over time: tools built based on operator feedback and real-world experience. Features like out-of-range alerts that flag potential issues automatically. Digital shift notes that keep the whole team informed in real time, not just whoever checks the right file. And maintenance records that stay searchable and complete, so new operators can learn from years of past work instead of reinventing solutions.

The common thread isn't the technology itself, but the shift in mindset: daily work is no longer disposable—it builds value each day.

TRAINING WITHOUT STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Workforce development has become a

central focus across the rural water sector, and for good reason. Apprenticeships, cross-training, and succession planning all depend on one thing: properly transferred and recorded heritage knowledge.

New operators don't just need to know what to do—they need to understand why tasks are done a certain way, what acceptable ranges look like, and how today's readings compare to last month or last year.

When operational data is organized and easy to find, training becomes far more effective:

- New staff can review past trends instead of relying on memory.
- Supervisors can explain decisions using real system data.
- Knowledge gets shared across shifts instead of staying siloed.

This takes pressure off senior staff who would otherwise be constantly "translating" the system for others, and it allows newer operators to gain confidence more quickly.

COMPLIANCE AS A BYPRODUCT OF SMART OPERATIONS

Another benefit of well-organized records is that compliance becomes less stressful—not because requirements disappear but because documentation is already in place.

Many compliance issues arise not from missed work but from missing proof. When records are incomplete, inconsistent, or hard to find, even well-run systems can find themselves exposed during inspections, sanitary surveys, or month-end reporting.

By building documentation into daily operations, some utilities are finding that compliance becomes a natural result of doing the job well, rather than a separate task that requires scrambling to pull everything together after the fact.

This approach also aligns with what regulators need and are increasingly looking for: historical data, clear records, and consistency to tell the full story.

BUILDING RESILIENCE WITHOUT ADDING WORK

Rural utilities are rightly cautious about adopting new tools or processes that add complexity. The goal isn't to add steps—because tools that aren't simple don't last.

Systems that focus on preserving what operators know aren't trying to digitize everything at once. Instead, they're prioritizing:

- Critical daily tasks
- High-risk compliance areas
- Knowledge held by only one or two people

By starting there, they build resilience step by step without overwhelming staff.

LOOKING AHEAD

As the rural water workforce continues to evolve, preserving what operators know will become just as important as maintaining physical infrastructure. Pipes, pumps, and treatment systems can be repaired or replaced. The knowledge that keeps systems running, once lost, is far harder to recover.

Whether through internal systems or purpose-built software like Waterly, utilities that treat daily operations as a shared resource are setting themselves up for continuity, compliance, and confidence—not just this year but for the next generation of operators. [CWJ](#)

Audi Findley is the Customer Success Manager for Waterly.

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RURAL AMERICA RELIES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT



USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER PROGRAMS PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

PUBLIC HEALTH FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Water is a vital resource and is required for all aspects of daily life, including drinking, cooking, washing, and flushing. In order to protect public health, all Americans should have access to this resource through reliable infrastructure.

Rural America's 46.1 million residents deserve safe drinking water and clean wastewater treatment just as much as urban or metropolitan residents. While access to basic water infrastructure may be taken for granted by many American citizens, it still is not a reality for approximately 146,000 rural households.

Over the last 70 years, through billions of dollars in financial assistance through USDA RD, the U.S. has made great advancements in the standard of living in rural America. Millions now have access to safe drinking water that their parents did not have. Thousands of rural communities now have modern wastewater systems, eliminating millions of failed septic tanks, cesspools, straight pipes, and worse.

For the 27,500 public elementary and secondary schools, approximately 9.8 million students, and 1,810 hospitals in rural America, public health would be immediately jeopardized without safe drinking water and clean wastewater treatment.

Even for established water and wastewater systems, new regulations such as EPA's recent PFAS and Lead and Copper Rules results in costly operational and infrastructure upgrades. USDA RD WEP ensures rural America and its communities have access to funding when they are faced with making these upgrades to remain in compliance.

Today's Congressional policies and funding decisions are jeopardizing the public health of every community in rural America. Budget cuts will leave USDA WEP unable to accomplish its mission. WEP is instrumental in helping rural America ensure public health is protected for all rural people.

PROMOTION BY THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS (WEP)

Since 1972, USDA RD WEP has been the consistent source of support for rural communities to complete necessary upgrades to their water and wastewater facilities.

During 2023, WEP obligated more than \$1.6 billion in loans and grants, with 73.5% of projects addressing a health and sanitary issue.

The projects funded support more than 1.1 million rural residents, including approximately 28,326 new service connections.

TELL CONGRESS NOW

KEEP RURAL AMERICA STRONG!

Scan the QR Code to learn more about how you can help keep Rural America Strong!





THE IMPACT



WEP PROVIDES NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT FOR SULLIVAN, ILLINOIS

RURAL AMERICA DESERVES RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“If Congress does away with this funding, there will be a lot of communities that are unable to provide safe drinking water to their customers. Nobody is going to pay an additional \$150 every month for their water services. This funding is vital to small communities to be able to meet compliance and provide safe drinking water.”

- Chuck Woodworth
Sullivan Public Health and Safety Commissioner



IMPACT IN ACTION

Portions of the City of Sullivan’s treatment plant were over 40 years old and in dire need of repair and the chlorination system had no backup.

“We had an evaluation from the EPA with the old water plant and they wanted redundancy on the softening process and other items. With the condition of the building, we were going to have to rebuild part of the building,” said Chuck Woodworth, Sullivan’s Public Health and Safety Commissioner.

Illinois Rural Water Association Circuit Riders worked with the community’s administration and operational staff to obtain funding through USDA RD.

“We met with them and got the paperwork started. They said we were eligible for everything and that it would be a wonderful project for us to do. Working with RD was awesome. We would ask something, and they would have an answer. The whole process, I felt like, was very easy,” Woodworth said.

This project, completed in October 2023, alleviated all health and sanitary concerns, met Illinois EPA requirements, and ensured safe potable water for all users.

“If not for the help from the loan to build the plant, we would probably not be able to meet compliance today. We would not have been able to afford to make the required changes. Without Rural Development funding, we wouldn’t have been able to do that,” Woodworth said.

CITY OF SULLIVAN, IL
POPULATION | 4,413
WATER USERS | 2,367

CALL TO ACTION

Fund Water Infrastructure - Stand Up for USDA Rural Development

Rural Development will continue to play a vital role in modernizing, preserving, and protecting rural America’s infrastructure and public health. You can help secure its future today by signing the pledge and writing to your Congressional representatives today.

Providing adequate support and resources necessary to protect and enhance the environment, public health, sustainability of utilities, and economic vitality of rural America with clean, affordable, and safe water service is a primary responsibility for our federal elected officials.

Visit www.ruralwaterstrong.org to learn more.



Carbon Reduction and Grid Resilience

How demand response supports water facility sustainability goals

By Jon Miranda

Across California, water and wastewater facilities are being asked to do more with less. Rising electricity demand, infrastructure constraints, and long-term sustainability goals are shaping how agencies think about energy use and operational planning.

At the same time, many utilities are working toward carbon reduction targets and broader environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments. These goals increasingly require practical, measurable actions that can be implemented without disrupting critical services.

Demand response is one tool that water facilities can use today to support both operational reliability and sustainability objectives.

WHAT DRIVES PEAK DEMAND ON THE GRID

Peak demand periods occur when electricity use across the grid reaches high levels. This can be driven by a combination of factors, including regional load growth, generation availability, and broader system conditions.

During these periods, utilities may rely on less efficient or higher-emission generation to maintain reliability. This not only increases system stress but also raises costs and emissions across the grid.

HOW DEMAND RESPONSE HELPS WATER FACILITIES

Demand response (DR) allows facilities to temporarily reduce or shift electricity use during grid events based on predefined operating limits. For water and wastewater agencies, DR can be implemented in a controlled and automated way that protects compliance requirements and service reliability.

Facilities maintain full control over participation parameters, ensuring that essential treatment and delivery processes are not compromised. Adjustments are typically focused on non-critical loads or operational flexibility that already exists within the system.

By reducing load during peak demand events, water facilities help lower grid stress and support more efficient system operation.

SUPPORTING CARBON REDUCTION AND ESG GOALS

Demand response aligns naturally with carbon reduction efforts. Reducing electricity use during peak periods lowers reliance on higher-emission generation and supports cleaner grid operations overall.

For agencies tracking sustainability progress, DR participation can serve as a documented, measurable action toward environmental goals. Working with demand response providers who offer visibility into carbon impact, such as the amount of avoided emissions during DR events, can be especially helpful for ESG reporting and internal communications. Many DR platforms can help quantify those impacts with third-party-verified data, making it easier to translate energy actions into sustainability outcomes that matter to boards, funders, and community stakeholders.

AUTOMATION, UPGRADES, AND GRID-SUPPORTIVE OPERATIONS

Modern DR participation often relies on automation and real-time monitoring. Facilities define the conditions under which participation occurs, and systems respond automatically when events

are called. This approach minimizes operational burden while contributing to grid reliability.

For agencies looking to modernize or enhance facility controls, California utilities also offer incentive programs for certain upgrades, such as SCADA system improvements, that support greater load flexibility and DR readiness.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS AND LONG-TERM VALUE

In addition to environmental benefits, many DR programs offer financial incentives. These payments can help offset electricity costs or fund future facility upgrades, creating a path to long-term value.

For water agencies managing tight budgets, DR offers a way to align sustainability and reliability goals with practical cost management.

LOOKING AHEAD

As grid conditions continue to evolve and sustainability expectations grow, demand response provides water and wastewater facilities with a flexible, low-risk way to support carbon reduction and system reliability.

When integrated into a broader energy strategy, DR can help agencies meet environmental goals while maintaining safe, reliable service for the communities they serve. [CWJ](#)

Jon Miranda is the Marketing Manager for Enersponse.



Join Us in South Lake Tahoe

Education & Exhibitor Show • April 27–30, 2026 • Caesars Republic Lake Tahoe



Our annual conference is your opportunity to connect, learn, and showcase—all in one unforgettable alpine setting. Across multiple days, dive into tailored educational sessions led by industry experts, engage with exhibitors offering the latest in rural water technology, and collaborate with peers to solve real-world challenges facing your systems. With

networking breakfasts, themed receptions, and hands-on demonstrations built into the schedule, you'll come away with both actionable knowledge and lasting relationships. Between conference hours, enjoy Caesars Republic Lake Tahoe's welcoming resort atmosphere and the natural beauty of South Lake Tahoe—a setting that makes connecting, learning, and recharging enjoyable. Visit calruralwater.org/expo to register, or use the registration form on page 19.

Exhibitor registration is also open! Visit calruralwater.org/expo for details. If you have any questions or need further information to register, please contact Candice Jackson at 916-283-8502 or email candicej@calruralwater.org.

THE ANNUAL CRWA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The California Rural Water Association is pleased to bring the Annual Scholarship Program for the year 2026. This scholarship includes three possible awards.

- One \$1,100 award towards any AWE course(s) provided by CRWA including lodging and a food stipend.
- Two \$3,000 awards towards the CRWA Apprenticeship Program.



The scholarships are predicated on the idea that as part of the CRWA family we should be doing as much as we possibly

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can to fulfill the water need of California's rural communities.

We are accepting applications for our scholarship until **March 13, 2026**. Please visit calruralwater.org/expo for the downloadable application. The application can be faxed to 916-553-4904 or mailed to CRWA, 1234 North Market Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95834.

The scholarships will be awarded at the Annual Banquet to be held at Caesars Republic, South Lake Tahoe. Applicants do not need to attend the EXPO conference to receive a scholarship; however, attendance is **highly recommended**.

OPERATOR OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS

This is your chance to brag about your system's personnel! Do you have a water and/or wastewater operator who goes above and beyond to excel in their management of your water system? If so, we want to know about them and give them the recognition they deserve for being the best in the business!



2025 Operator of the Year award winner Anthony "Tony" Marraccino of Oceano CSD.

Each CRWA member system can submit one nomination in each field. Selection of winners will be based on a submitted example of how the nominee has contributed to the system's operations and demonstrated their commitment to the system and its constituents. Information about the nominee's achievements both within and outside of the system, as well as letters of recommendation, will also be considered during the selection process. This is a great way to honor your exemplary water and/or wastewater operator!

Visit calruralwater.org/expo for details, or use the nomination form on page 21. Please send your nomination form to Candice Jackson via email at candicej@calruralwater.org; by mail to California Rural Water Association, 1234 N. Market Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95834; or fax it to 916-553-4904.

The nomination form(s) and supporting documentation must be received by the CRWA office no later than **February 28, 2026**. CRWA management will select this year's award recipients on the basis of the nomination materials received and processed. Award recipients will be notified on or before April 18, 2026.

DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE BEST TASTING WATER IN CALIFORNIA?

To enter your water in the "Best Tasting Water in California" contest, complete the application form on page 22 or visit calruralwater.org/expo to download an application. Applicants must be registered to attend the Expo (1-day minimum) to enter the competition.

Bring a one-gallon, room-temperature sample in a sanitized glass container to the Expo Registration Desk no later than 9:30 am on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. Ensure your system's name is clearly labeled on the container; failure to meet any of the abovementioned requirements will disqualify your best-tasting contender.



Judges will sample the entries based on clarity, bouquet, and taste. The initial round of tastings will narrow down the competition to three finalists. The final round of the taste test will take place at the Rural Water Taste Test Luncheon on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. The finalists and the winner will be announced at the CRWA Awards Banquet that evening. The winning system's water will have the opportunity to represent California at the Great American Water Taste Test in Washington, D.C., in February 2027!



2026 EXPO SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

MONDAY, APRIL 27

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm Registration Desk Hours
6:30 pm – 7:00 pm Welcome Reception*
Third Floor

*Sponsored by: USG Water Solutions

TUESDAY, APRIL 28

7:00 am – 5:00 pm Registration Desk Hours
8:00 am – 9:00 am Breakfast and mandatory open session
9:00 am – 5:00 pm Classes
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Taste Test Luncheon
5:00 pm – 5:30 pm CRWA Annual Business Meeting
6:30 pm – 9:00 pm Annual Awards Banquet and Apprenticeship Graduation
9:30 pm – 10:30 pm Evening Entertainment

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

7:00 am – 5:00 pm Registration Desk Hours
8:00 am – 9:00 am Breakfast
9:00 am – 12:00 pm Classes
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch with Exhibitors
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Exhibitor Hours
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Raffle Drawings
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm Micro Brew Reception

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

7:00 am – 5:00 pm Registration Desk Hours
8:00 am – 9:00 am Breakfast
9:00 am – 5:00 pm Classes
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch



CRWA 2026 EDUCATION & EXHIBITOR EXPO
 April 27 - 30, 2026 • South Lake Tahoe



Registration fee includes:

Daily breakfast and lunch on all 3 days, Annual Awards Banquet, and Exhibitor Showcase Reception.
 Meals will be provided to you only on the days you are registered.

Registration Fees - Includes Annual Awards Banquet! *(Must check box below to attend banquet.)*

Individual registration:

- Member: \$610 per person Non-member: \$725 per person
 1 day only: \$550 Member/\$650 Non-member - Select Day: Tues. Wed. Thurs.

- Each additional guest(s) for meals: \$252 for the week OR Daily \$112
 Exhibit Hall and Industry Networking Reception with Wine and Beer Only: \$150

Have a large group? If you have three or more attendees from your system, please call us to discuss a group rate.

Fees

Annual Awards Banquet *(This event is included in the registration fee.)*

You must check the box in order to receive banquet ticket(s).

- YES!** I would like to attend the Annual Awards Banquet, Tuesday, April 28 (Included in Registration Fee)
 \$100 - Banquet Guest -- Guest Name: _____

Fees

FREE

Workshops *(Please indicate which workshops you will be attending.)*

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday | | | Wednesday | | | Thursday | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W1
<small>MANDATORY</small> | <input type="checkbox"/> W9 | <input type="checkbox"/> R3 | <input type="checkbox"/> W5 | <input type="checkbox"/> R4 | <input type="checkbox"/> W6 | <input type="checkbox"/> WW5 | <input type="checkbox"/> M5 | ↓ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W2 | <input type="checkbox"/> W10 | <input type="checkbox"/> M1 | <input type="checkbox"/> W11 | <input type="checkbox"/> M4 | <input type="checkbox"/> W7 | <input type="checkbox"/> WW6 | <input type="checkbox"/> M6 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W3 | <input type="checkbox"/> WW1 | <input type="checkbox"/> M2 | <input type="checkbox"/> WW4 | | <input type="checkbox"/> W12 | <input type="checkbox"/> R5 | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W4 | <input type="checkbox"/> WW3 | <input type="checkbox"/> M3 | | | <input type="checkbox"/> W13 | <input type="checkbox"/> R6 | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W8 | <input type="checkbox"/> R1 | | | | | | | |

TOTAL AMOUNT: \$

ATTENDEE INFORMATION		
Name: _____		
System: _____		
System Mailing Address: _____		
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____
Phone: _____		Fax: _____
Email: _____		
The email address(es) above will receive all confirmation materials for the attendee(s) on this form.		
PAYMENT INFORMATION: PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE REGISTRATION CAN BE PROCESSED.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Check (payable to CRWA) #:		<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard/Visa/American Express/Other Credit Card
Credit card number: _____		TOTAL - \$ _____
Expiration date: _____		Card code: _____
Name on card: _____		Authorized signature: _____
ACCOMMODATIONS		
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

To send your registration please:

Mail to - Attention: Candice Jackson, CRWA, 1234 North Market Boulevard, Sacramento CA 95834 • Fax - 916.553.4904 or Email - candicej@calruralwater.org



2026 EXPO TRAINING SCHEDULE

TUESDAY | April 28, 2026

	Water 1	Water 2	Wastewater	Regulatory	Management
8 - 9 AM	Mandatory Opening Session/Breakfast (W1)				
9 AM - 12 PM	Water Math Chris Rizzo (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours 9 AM - 12 PM (W2)	Water Distribution Systems Michael Urwin (Hydra-Stop) 1.5 SWRCB Contact Hours Do's & Don'ts of Water Tank Maintenance Mark Moore (BLD) 1.5 SWRCB Contact Hours	Basic Wastewater Math Michael Busse (CRWA) 3 Completion Hours 9 AM - 12 PM (WW1)	Water Rates Do's & Don'ts How to Comply with Water Our Voters have Done! James Ciampa & Reid Miller (Lagerlof, LLC) 2 SWRCB Contact Hours 9 - 11 AM (R1) Countdown to Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) Compliance (120 Water) 1 SWRCB Contact Hour 11 AM - 12 PM (R2)	Protecting Systems and Stakeholders: Employee Theft, Wildfire, and Employment Practices Matthew Olphin & Brent Gates (Glatfelter Public Practice) 2 SWRCB Contact Hours 9 - 11 AM (M1) AMI for Small Utilities Keith Jones (USG Solutions) 1 SWRCB Contact Hour 11 AM - 12 PM (M2)
11 AM - 12 PM	PFAS Update Hank Naughton (Napoli Law) 1 SWRCB Contact Hour 11 AM - 12 PM (W3)	3 SWRCB Contact Hours 9 AM - 12 PM (W8)			
12 - 1 PM	Lunch				
1 - 3 PM	SB552 Julia Martinez (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours 1 - 4 PM (W4)	Developing Groundwater Resources for Conjunctive Use and Resiliency Julia Asbenson (MC Engineering & ESRI) 2 SWRCB Contact Hours 1 - 3 PM (W9) RAS Bill Pedler (RAS) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours 2 - 5 PM (W10)	Smoke Testing Pat Conway (CRWA) 4 Completion Hours 1 - 5 PM (WW3)	Leak Detection & Water Loss Accountability Michael Sims (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours 1 - 4 PM (R3)	Ten Most Common Pitfalls of the Utility Manager Keith Jones (USG Solutions) 4 SWRCB Contact Hours 1 - 5 PM (M3)
2 - 5 PM					
5 - 5:30 PM	Annual Business Meeting				
6:30 PM	Awards Banquet				

WEDNESDAY | April 29, 2026

	Water 1	Water 2	Wastewater	Regulatory	Management
8 - 9 AM	Breakfast				
9 AM - 12 PM	Choosing a Lab Using a Lab Mark Ellis (Enthalpy) & Michael Sims (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (W5)	Geology Rules: Case Studies in Geo-Sciences of Ground Water Assessment and Supply Chuck Houser (SCS Engineers) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (W11)	Activated Sludge - Package Plants and Oxidation Ditches Joh Rowe (CRWA) 3 Completion Hours (WW4)	Design and Treatment Solutions for Water Systems in California John Schwartz (USABB) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (R4)	Project Funding 101 Julia Martinez (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (M4)
12 - 1 PM	Lunch with Exhibitors				
1 - 5 PM	Exhibit Hall and Brewfest				

THURSDAY | April 30, 2026

	Water 1	Water 2	Wastewater	Regulatory	Management
8 - 9 AM	Breakfast				
9 AM - 12 PM	Advanced Math Chris Rizzo (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (W6)	Saving Money, Pumping, Groundwater (Hose Solutions) 2 SWRCB Contact Hours 9 - 11 AM (W12)	Confined Space Entry Pat Conway (CRWA) 3 Completion Hours (WW5)	Operator Ethics: The Foundation of Proper Decision Making John Schwartz (USABB) 1 SWRCB Contact Hour 9 - 10 AM (R5)	Cross Connection Control Program (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (M5)
12 - 1 PM	Lunch				
1 - 4 PM	Water Sources Deb Skelton (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (W7)	AI Won't Take Your Job Chris Sosnowski (Waterly) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (W13)	Wastewater Permitting & Reporting Mike Busse (CRWA) 3 Completion Hours (WW6)	New Regulatory Updates Belinda Carroll (CRWA) 3 SWRCB Contact Hour (R6)	Ethics: Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) 3 SWRCB Contact Hours (M6)

Please note: This is a preliminary schedule and is subject to change. Please check our website for the most current lineup of courses.

Questions? Please contact us: California Rural Water Association
800.833.0322 • www.calruralwater.org • candicej@calruralwater.org



ANNUAL WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATOR OF THE YEAR NOMINATION FORM



Nomination Forms

The nomination form(s) and supporting documentation must be received by the CRWA office **no later than February 28, 2026.**

Nomination forms are also available at www.calruralwater.org/expo

Nominee Criteria

A nominee must be a certified water and/or wastewater operator, must have worked full time for the system for at least two years, and must have the appropriate certifications to operate that system. **The recipient of this award must be able to attend the 2026 CRWA Education Expo on April 28, 2026.**

Please fax, mail or email materials to:

CRWA
Attn: Candice Jackson
1234 North Market Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95834
e: candicej@calruralwater.org
f: 916.553.4904

This is your chance to brag about your system’s personnel! Do you have a water and/or wastewater operator who goes above and beyond to excel in their management of your water system? If so, we want to know about them and give them the recognition they deserve for being the best in the business! **Each CRWA member system can submit one nomination in each field.** Selection of winners will be based on a submitted example of how the nominee has contributed to the system’s operations and demonstrated their commitment to the system and its constituents. Information about the nominee’s achievements both within and outside of the system, as well as letters of recommendation, will also be considered during the selection process. This is a great way to honor your exemplary water and/or wastewater operator!

SYSTEM CRITERIA

Nominations are accepted from water and wastewater systems that are members of CRWA. The system may nominate one operator for each category (water and wastewater). The system must be in compliance, or in the process of becoming compliant, due to the nominee’s efforts. Nominations can be submitted by co-workers, management, boards or office staff.

NOMINATION DOCUMENTATION

The nomination form below must be accompanied with:

- Proof of the nominee’s operator certification(s)
- Nominee’s job description(s)
- A brief narrative description of the nominee’s contributions to the system’s operations and their commitment to the system (e.g., through letters of support from the system, SWRCB, community members, or board members), and an outline/description the nominee’s achievements.
- Contact names and numbers for follow-up research by CRWA

SELECTION PROCESS

The nomination form(s) and supporting documentation must be received by the CRWA office no later than February 28, 2026. CRWA awards committee will select this year’s award recipients on the basis of the nomination materials received and processed. Award recipients will be notified on or before March 30, 2026.

AWARD APPLICATION		
System Name:		
Nominee Name:		
Nominee Title:		
Nominated For: <input type="checkbox"/> Water Operator of the Year <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater Operator of the Year		
City:	State:	ZIP:
Phone:	Fax:	
Email:		
Submitted By (please print clearly):		
Please submit this form and required documentation no later than February 28, 2026 to: California Rural Water Association, ATTN: Candice Jackson at: 1234 North Market Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95834 • E-mail: candicej@calruralwater.org • Phone: 916.283.8502 • Fax: 916.553.4904		



DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE BEST TASTING WATER IN CALIFORNIA?



Application Forms

Please send entry form for the Best Tasting Water by April 24, 2026, to:

CRWA
 Attn: Resource Development
 1234 North Market Blvd.
 Sacramento, CA 95833
 Phone: 916.553.4900
 Fax: 916.553.4904
 lcarmona@calruralwater.org

You may also bring the form with you to the conference and give it to CRWA staff at registration.

Application forms are also available at www.calruralwater.org/expo

To enter your water in the “Best Tasting Water in California” contest, bring a **one-gallon, room temperature sample in a sanitized glass container*** to the Expo Registration Desk no later than 9:30 am on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. Make sure your system’s name is clearly labeled on the container; failure to meet any of the above mentioned requirements will result in disqualifications of your best-tasting contender.

SELECTION PROCESS

A panel of judges will sample the entries based on clarity, bouquet, and taste. The initial round of tastings will narrow down the competition to three finalists. The final round of the taste test will take place at the Rural Water Taste Test Luncheon on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. The finalist and the winner will be announced at the CRWA Awards Banquet that evening. The winning system’s water will have the opportunity to represent California at the Great American Water Taste Test in Washington D.C. in February 2027!

Please complete the section below and submit it to the CRWA Resource Development Department by April 24, 2026, or bring it to the Expo along with your water sample. Please print clearly so we know whose name to announce at the Awards Banquet.

WATER TASTING APPLICATION		
System Name:		
System Address:		
City:	State:	ZIP:
Phone:	Fax:	
Email:		
Submitted By (please print clearly):		
Please bring this form to the registration desk with your water one-gallon water sample. Early entry via mail/email by April 24, 2026 to: California Rural Water Association, Attn: Resource Development, 1234 North Market Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95834 • Phone: 916.553.4900 • Fax: 916.553.4900 • E-mail: lcarmona@calruralwater.org *Must be registered to attend the Expo (1-day minimum) to enter the competition.		



Water Loss?

No funds to purchase equipment? No time to train?

Complete Leak Survey

On both sides of the meter/Simplify distribution pipeline repair and maintenance

Leak Correlation & Leak Locating

Improve effectiveness of water conservation efforts to reduce unaccounted-for water loss

Acoustic Leak Detection

Increase usage efficiency and reduce water losses for sustainable water management in old infrastructures

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Optimum reliability and efficiency. The ORIGINAL Leak Specialists to improve your bottom line

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JCarter@AmericanLeakDetection.com

AmericanLeakDetection.com



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Household leaks waste nearly

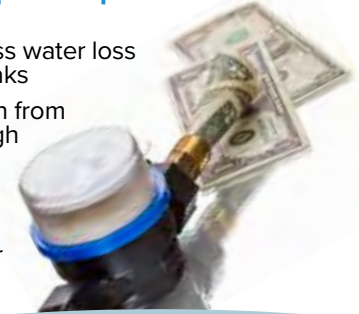
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Investor-owned Water Companies Can Now Join a Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

By Dustin Hardwick

Part of CRWA's work in assisting rural communities is to keep up to date and informed on important legislation in California and D.C. Sometimes, we even help by supporting specific laws being brought to a vote, and last year, AB 428 caught our eye. After seeing how the law could help some of our members, we voiced our support, and AB 428 was signed and passed on October 1, 2025. The bill, which just went into effect on January 1, allows investor-owned water and wastewater utilities to join a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), something which was previously only available to public districts and mutual water companies. We believe this bill is crucial for the future of investor-owned water companies and will help to ensure the availability of affordable insurance options for all California water utilities.

WHAT IS A JPA?

A JPA is a legal arrangement that allows two or more public agencies to agree to combine their resources and services with the same goal. As an example, CRWA formed a JPA when we created our insurance risk pool, MemberGuard, with the goal of helping water systems pool their resources together and save money on their insurance. JPAs are public entities, held to higher level of scrutiny and required to follow specific rules and regulations to maintain good standing. They are typically managed by a Board of Directors that holds public meetings on a regular basis. When joining a JPA, entities are members of this larger group, which means their voice matters. Policies, programs, and rules are developed with input from members, and with members' interests in mind, and aren't dictated by outside shareholders.

HOW IS THIS CHANGE BENEFICIAL?

Allowing investor-owned water companies to join a JPA provides several benefits, but most importantly, this will help to reduce the cost of insurance for private entities that have faced the challenge of rising costs in premiums due to wildfire risks, drought, and weather-related changes. A JPA such as MemberGuard provides stable and reliable coverage, as well as protection from rate increases.

Overall, this new law gives investor-owned utilities the opportunity to manage rising costs more effectively and strengthens the various risk pools throughout the state by increasing membership. By joining a JPA, these water utilities can better protect their systems and their customers while leading to a more sustainable water future for California.



But not all pools are created equal! CRWA's risk pool is backed by an experienced organization that has handled thousands of California water entity claims and grants members access to training and technical assistance. Before you dive into a risk pool, be sure to see what MemberGuard has to offer. What's more, MemberGuard is fully reinsured by AIG, which has an A.M. Best "A+" (XV) Superior rating. This means that if there's a loss in the program, it won't be the responsibility of other members to cover the costs.

For inquiries and expert guidance pertaining to water insurance coverage and risk management, you are encouraged to contact me, Dustin Hardwick, Managing Agent of URIS/Executive Director of California Rural Water Risk Management Authority, or one of our dedicated licensed specialists with a distinct focus on this sector of insurance.

Utility Resource Insurance Services (URIS)
License #0G58189

DUSTIN HARDWICK MANAGING AGENT

License #0G53300
California Rural Water Risk Management Authority
Call: (760) 920-0842
Email: dhardwick@urisinsurance.com

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Call: (530) 306-7045
Email: telisher@urisinsurance.com



The 2026 training calendar is out!

There are some great classes coming to an area near you. Can't travel right now? We are offering hybrid classes. Keep an eye out for more information. Visit calruralwater.org to review a complete list of classes or to register.

QUICK SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Date	Class	Location	Contact Hours
March 4–5, 2026	Wastewater Certification Review Grades 1–2	Sacramento (Sacramento County)	12 Contact Hours
March 9, 2026	AB54	Online	2 Contact Hours
March 11, 2026	Clow-Valve	Sacramento (Sacramento County)	4 Contact Hours
March 11–12, 2026	Distribution Certification Review Grades 1–2 (Hybrid)	Morgan Hill / Webinar (Santa Clara County)	12 Contact Hours
March 12, 2026	Cyber Security and Emergency Response Plans	TBD (Humboldt County)	6 Contact Hours
March 18–21, 2026	AWE Water Treatment	Sacramento (Sacramento County)	36 Contact Hours
April 27–30, 2026	CRWA EXPO!		
May 6–7, 2026	Water Treatment Certification Review Grades 1–2 (Hybrid)	Nice (Lake County)	12 Contact Hours
May 14, 2026	Project Funding 101	TBD (Lassen County)	4 Contact Hours
May 18–22, 2026	AWE Distribution	Sacramento (Sacramento County)	36 Contact Hours
May 27–28, 2026	Distribution Certification Review Grades 1–2	Palmdale (Los Angeles County)	12 Contact Hours
June 1, 2026	AB54	Online	2 Contact Hours
June 17–18, 2026	Water Treatment Certification Review Grades 1–2	San Jose (Santa Clara)	12 Contact Hours



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The WaterLMS learning library has been thoughtfully curated to include high-quality materials from both the California Rural Water Association and ACR Publications, ensuring you get relevant, industry-aligned

content that keeps you up to date on best practices, regulations, and operational skills. Whether you're maintaining distribution systems, troubleshooting treatment processes, or expanding your management expertise, the course catalog offers a wide variety of topics to support your goals — and all at your own pace.

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WaterLMS is also mobile-friendly and built with ease-of-use in mind, so you can access education anytime, wherever you are. From quick contact hour sessions to in-depth modules covering complex water distribution principles, the platform supports a variety of learning needs while advancing your technical knowledge and confidence on the job.

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Snapshots

Over the years, CRWA's Preferred Provider Program has grown from nine agencies at the time of its inception to the current fifteen. The Preferred Providers offer a multitude of services to CRWA member agencies across the state. The program is designed to collectively leverage our members' buying power, providing significant benefit to California's rural systems. It has had continued success in offering discounts on various value-added products and services to members of CRWA since 2009. The table below provides a brief description of the products and services offered by the 2026 Preferred Provider Program members.

120Water	Digital water solutions that protect public health now and in the future by combining cloud-based software, digital sampling kits, and regulatory expertise to help execute water safety, compliance, and wastewater monitoring programs.
American Leak Detection	Accurate, non-destructive detection of hidden water, sewer & gas leaks in residential, commercial & municipal buildings.
Bartle Wells Associates	Independent financial advisor to public agencies that specializes in water & wastewater rates and finances. Specialized in Rate & Fee Studies, Financial Plans, Project Financing.
Cannon	Provides electrical engineering services.
CoBank	A national cooperative lender that supports the borrowing needs of U.S. agriculture and rural infrastructure across rural America.
Enersponse	Demand response program for water operators with no minimum pump size requirement. It provides a simple and convenient energy reduction program, which saves customers the utmost energy and money possible through rebates and incentives.
Enthalpy Analytical	Specializes in providing comprehensive analytical chemistry services with a focus on environmental testing. They offer a wide range of services, including soil and water sample analysis, on-site sample collection, regional courier service, and superior customer support.
GovCard with Evolv	A zero-cost solution for collecting payments.
Lagerlof, LLP	A full-service law firm located in Pasadena, California, that specializes in the water and municipal law field, particularly in representing special districts and mutual water companies.
NV5	Provides the following services: Operational advice, District engineering services, AB54 system mapping, Design of water supply, distribution & treatment systems, Wastewater collection & treatment engineering, Recycled water engineering, Construction management/oversight, Regulatory & funding agency assistance, Start-up & trouble-shooting services, Surveying, staking & mapping, Structural Engineering, Asset Management, Geotechnical engineering, Materials & compaction testing, USDA & state funding assistance, Electrical engineering.
RealTime Aquifer Services (RAS)	A small business offering consulting, data interpretation and technical field services for the characterization, monitoring, remediation and management of aquifers and groundwater systems, including the performance and optimization of water supply wells.
SCS Engineers	Aids clients in the use and management of surface and groundwater resources.
ServLine	Insurance that provides coverage for excess water charges and excess sewer charges, which the customer owes the utility for a qualifying leak in the customer's water lines; helps utilities generate a revenue from lost water via leaks.
USG Water Solutions	A fully integrated professional service and contracting firm dedicated to providing sustainable products and services for potable water distribution systems and sewage collection systems, such as rehab and asset management.
Waterly	Waterly is an affordable, easy-to-use app that offers solutions for data management and asset management. With Waterly Core, you can replace error-prone spreadsheets and clipboards and time-consuming monthly reports with simple data entry and one-click reports. With Waterly Assets, you can take the guess work out of your asset management with digitized asset hierarchy, work orders and preventative maintenance reminders.

For more information on our service providers, please visit our website at calruralwater.org/membership/members-area/preferred-provider-program or contact CRWA's Resource Development Department at 916.553.4900.



ADJUSTABLE S-TUBE FOR TANDEM SETTINGS

The patent-pending adjustable S-tube from Ford Meter Box is designed to simplify tandem setter installations. This innovative fitting adjusts up to 2" to accommodate a wide variety of pressure reducing valves (PRVs) or other devices in tandem applications. The adjustable S-tube can be ordered separately for retrofit projects or specified on new tandem setter assemblies.

FORD METER BOX
fordmeterbox.com

Blue-White



FULLY ASSEMBLED CHEMICAL FEED SYSTEM

The CHEM-FEED engineered skid system from Blue-White is ideal for small spaces with a condensed design and compact footprint. The skid is constructed of strong and lightweight chemical and UV-resistant polyethylene. It is shipped fully assembled and features leak-free threadless connections, a built-in fluid containment tray, and a visual flow indicator for easy confirmation that chemical is flowing. Available in one- and two-pump configurations.

BLUE-WHITE INDUSTRIES
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AA THREAD
aathread.com



COARSE BUBBLE DIFFUSERS

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PROCO PRODUCTS
procoproducts.com



ULTRA-FINE GRIT REMOVAL

The PISTA® INVORSOR™ from Smith & Loveless is a next-generation grit chamber engineered to remove ultra-fine grit particles down to 75 microns with up to 95% efficiency. The patent-pending system combines flat floor hydraulic vortex and inclined plate settling in a single chamber, delivering consistent performance across low, average, and peak flows—without derating, even up to 50 MGD. The design offers greater capacity, flexibility, and lower capital and operating costs compared to traditional fine grit systems.

SMITH & LOVELESS INC.
smithandloveless.com



CONDITIONING PUMP

The Vaughan Conditioning Pump is a Vaughan Submersible Chopper Pump mounted on a portable stand and fitted with a high-velocity mixing nozzle. The Conditioning Pump recirculates the contents of the wet well, chopping and mixing to produce a homogeneous mixture that is more easily pumped out. Floating mats are removed and solids that have accumulated on the floor are resuspended. Because the pump is mounted on a portable stand, it can easily be used in multiple applications at a single jobsite, facility or municipally.

VAUGHAN COMPANY
chopperpumps.com



CELLULAR AMI

BEACON® Software as a Service (SaaS) is a powerful solution from Badger Meter that provides data analytics to help utilities optimize their operations. When paired with ORION® Cellular endpoints, BEACON delivers utilities 15-minute interval data they can use to improve day-to-day processes and address demands for operational transparency. Our cellular AMI solutions implement Network as Service (NaaS) and BEACON so utilities can deliver high-quality water with enhanced flexibility by eliminating ongoing system maintenance, providing data analytics remotely, and improving system resiliency.

BADGER METER
badgermeter.com

Do you have a product or service that would benefit California's rural water and wastewater utilities? Let us know. Send a brief product description and high-resolution photo to angela@roguemonkeymedia.com.

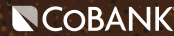


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