



January 2016

Dear AWWMA Members (and future Members!)

As we end one year and begin the next, we often take a little extra time to reflect on past challenges and achievements and look ahead to the future. Certainly 2015 was an eventful period in many ways across the world, in our nation, our state, and for our organization. Many important issues are under discussion and in the news that will undoubtedly impact the future of our country and the world. We most assuredly hope and pray that those in positions of authority everywhere will listen to good advice and make sound decisions to protect our way of life and encourage progress on all worthy endeavors.

As a group of water and wastewater industry managers and close associates we have organized ourselves in a manner that allows us to do our part to help further the larger all-encompassing goals of our society. Clean water and wastewater have been hailed by many as the singular most important health-related advancements of the modern era, and every day we do our part to maintain and improve the quality of the water we work with, no matter which end of the pipe our individual jobs deal with on a daily basis. We have historically provided training and networking opportunities to support our members through our highly successful Spring Workshop (March 15-16 in North Little Rock for 2016) and our Annual Meeting (July 20-23 in Fayetteville for 2016).

Though the AWWMA has not always been at the forefront of major activity or tried to provide information to our decision makers, several events 2015 have given us a clear indication that we can perform this service if we have the will and the resources to do so. Most notably of course is the passage of the Nutrient Trading Bill. Several members of our organization worked closely with the Governor's Office, Arkansas Legislature, and a wide array of representatives from various environmental and related stakeholder groups over the course of several months to help obtain legislative approval of this potentially significant bill. In the end, the bill passed with zero opposition in either the House or the Senate and is now law. Eventually, several of our members were nominated by the Governor to serve on the advisory group created by the legislation to help foster successful implementation of the concept of nutrient trading within the state. A number of meetings have been held and much activity has transpired so far, although there is of course much more to be done before nutrient trading actually becomes reality in Arkansas.

Our efforts and our position of influence as an organization were duly noted by many across the state and across the region. In fact, the AWWMA was noted along with such groups as the AR State Chamber of Commerce and the Poultry Federation for our contributions in the 'Southern Political Report Magazine'. We were subsequently asked to help represent the interests of our industry at a meeting with the United States EPA Region VI Administrator Ron Curry, along with Bill Honker and

David Gray of EPA and a number of high ranking individuals within ADEQ, during a discussion of the impacts of current and proposed minerals standards within the state. As one prominent environmental attorney mentioned after the meeting, the Cities were at last given a seat at the table for this important discussion, which we can only hope will become the rule instead of the exception for future dialogs. As we have discussed at several of our recent business meetings, those who will ultimately make decisions that will impact our industry need and deserve to have access to accurate and timely information regarding the ultimate impact of those decisions in the real world. The AWWMA is uniquely positioned to provide that information and education service.

With all of this in mind, we have reached the point where it is time to ‘put our money where our mouth is’, so to speak, as we move toward implementation of our own long discussed initiative to hire a full-time Executive Director for the AWWMA. We all recognize that our influence is needed and can be a very strong force for good if we can find a way to maintain a consistent presence and develop strong relationships among the wide variety of entities that need to hear our message. Our Officers and Board of Directors have reviewed and approved a job description for the Executive Director. We have developed a method of assessments to the various member cities and associate member organizations to provide funding for the position. More details are available at the website at www.arkwwma.org.

As of now, you will note that our 2016 membership forms reflect these new assessments and provide each City and Associate member firm with an opportunity to do their own part. We obviously encourage you to respond affirmatively by providing the level of support indicated for the size of your utility or organization. It is our intention to track the funds collected by the new assessments and make sure that those funds are only used for the purpose of funding the new Executive Director position. Should the members of the organization as a whole decide not to provide adequate funding and an Executive Director cannot be hired, then those collected funds will be returned.

We recognize that this is a potentially momentous decision with significant financial implications and the entire AWWMA Board of Directors is committed to making sure that we do our best to implement this position in a manner that will reflect positively on each of the member cities and firms and provide the level of service needed.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions, either by email or by visiting the ‘Members Only’ forum on the website, and thanks for your support!

Yours in Water,

Billy Ammons
2015-2016 AWWMA President