

## 2004—A Look Back



The year is almost over. Trade shows and industry events that have kept us running from one to the next are finally winding down. Business plans for 2005 are underway, and there is no better time to take a quick look back and examine what were some of the market predictions for 2004, according to the industry's experts.

At the beginning of 2004, *Water Quality Products* asked several industry professionals to present their view of the marketplace in 2004. Some of the predictions included various topics from the future of manufacturing in residential water treatment, to the implementation of new industry standards, to development of educational programs and certification. Almost 12 months later, the question is, were the predictions right?

Back in January, experts believed that new competitors, significant price-point pressure and the need for product innovation could create potentially difficult times in 2004 for water treatment manufacturers. It was also expected that the manufacturing of residential water treatment product would come mainly from Asia.

Currently, a report released in August 2004 by the McIlvaine Co. stated, "The world has emerged from recession and this has unleashed expenditures to expand and maintain production. However, there is a marked difference in the activity depending on the region. In the U.S. and Europe, the expenditures have been centered on repair and improvement of existing facilities. In Asia, the money is flowing toward new facilities and equipment."

At the beginning of the year, NSF was working on completion of the NSF/ANSI Standard for Shower Filters by the end of 2004. In October, they delivered the first American National Standard for shower filters developed to address the market's need for demonstrating product performance and safety.

Another important forecast was the development of additional education and training to meet the industry's business needs. As a result, Water Quality Association stepped up to the challenge and recently put together an online learning program that would save businesses time and money as well as meet the demand for in-house training.

So here we are, waiting to see what 2005 has in store for the industry. For one thing, with such an excellent track record, I can't wait to read the outlooks for 2005.

But before we turn the page on 2004, I wanted to remind you that earlier this year we promised you a new look developed exclusively for the *WQP* readers. During the last several months we have been working hard toward evolving the magazine's graphical presentation and editorial content. I am pleased to announce the launching of *Water Quality Products* redesign starting with our January 2005 issue.

Take a deep breath and don't look back!

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