

Kevin McCray



## Reaching New Heights in Groundwater

*With the National Ground Water Association's (NGWA) 2007 Ground Water Expo and Annual Meeting just around the corner, Water Quality Products checked in with the organization's executive director, Kevin McCray, to provide you a sneak peek. The event, set to take place Dec. 4 to 7 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla., will encourage industry professionals to build on newfound knowledge and take dialogue to the next level through its 'Soar to Success' theme.*

**WQP:** *What are some key groundwater issues NGWA will address?*

**Kevin McCray:** Probably the one we'll be devoting particular attention to is a growing recognition of the interrelationship between groundwater and surface water supplies and how they need to be managed—not as one or the other but as a total system. We're producing a video on that subject matter that will be debuting at the expo.

The other area that we're putting a lot of emphasis toward is safety in the trade side of our industry so that people remain safe and productive. The industry has a pretty good record but, like all records, they can always be improved on. We're looking to bring more safety content and workshops and materials to be distributed at the expo to help the industry be safer.

**WQP:** *What's the message underlying this year's theme? How will it be incorporated into the event?*

**McCray:** I think the underlying message is that an event like this is a place where those who really want to differentiate themselves in the marketplace come to build those skills and the knowledge it takes to be the best—to soar to success, to use the phrase we're using with the expo.

With over 70 hours of professional development training and workshops—everything from forklift operation certification to safety, to not only our now one-year-old drilling cost calculator but now the introduction this year of our pump installation cost calculator—clearly it is constantly about how to be better, how to be safer and how to be the most successful at your work.

**WQP:** *Who would benefit from participating in the 2007 Ground Water Expo?*

**McCray:** I think anybody that's in the groundwater industry, no matter what profession they serve, certainly can benefit. While a lot of the expo is oriented to the trade side, there is professional development that appeals to every profession within the industry, from the contractor who owns and operates his own business to his employees to the wholesale distributors and suppliers—in fact, there's

a special presentation just for those folks on the future of the supply industry serving our industry. And manufacturers, scientists and engineers—there's a lot of workshops and presentations that are very important to them as well.

**WQP:** *How many registrants is NGWA expecting?*

**McCray:** I think our past history has been, in recent years, growing. Certainly last year in Las Vegas was the largest crowd in our history. We had about 6,800 people. When we're not in Las Vegas, we have slightly smaller crowds, but our hope is that people will find the time to come to Orlando and participate—not only in going through the exhibit hall and seeing the new products and services offered by the exhibitors but also participate in the continuing education programs and the other opportunities available, such as committee work.

**WQP:** *What types of education and networking opportunities will the event offer?*

**McCray:** It will offer a video presentation on surface water/groundwater interaction. We'll also be doing workshops on the drilling cost calculator that was developed and introduced last year. This year we're introducing at the expo a pump installation cost calculator that members of the association are entitled to get a free copy of. We found the drilling cost calculator was a great incentive for people to join the organization—we had good growth in our contractor division last year as a result of that. Those, I would say, stand out, as well as the safety training.

The industry, like many trade industries, finds it a challenge to recruit and retain qualified employees. Part of that is that people want to be safe. So if you can show to your employees that you're taking safety seriously by providing them with the training and protections to remain safe, then it makes it an attractive and rewarding workplace.

Like many trade shows, the hallway of the exhibit aisles or the hallway between workshops is where a lot of networking occurs. And of course hearing what each other has to say, in terms of answering

and asking questions at workshops, is a great networking tool. Formally, we've set up what we're calling roundtables that will be available at the membership meeting of the association. There are 17 different topics there, like business succession and how to make associations all the more effective.

**WQP:** *The products showcase is a new feature this year. What can visitors expect?*

**McCray:** Oftentimes, people have the misconception that nothing changes in our industry, but the reality is that our manufacturers are developing improvements to their existing products as well as adding new products all the time. What we're trying to do is create a place where those stand out beyond what they will have in their own exhibit space. This will be a first glance kind of look for people, and then they can certainly pursue deeper details about those products through the individual producers in their exhibit space.

**WQP:** *What differentiates this gathering from other events of its kind?*

**McCray:** Almost year in and year out, it is the largest gathering. And the diversity in terms of where people come from to travel to it—we always have a good international turnout. We have people that literally come from every state in the nation. We're anticipating that again this year. Beyond geographic diversity, every profession in the industry participates in this event. It's a great opportunity for them to interact with each other; scientists and engineers will always acknowledge they learn a great deal from the contractors, and the contractors acknowledge that they learn from the engineers and scientists, as an example. And of course manufacturers and suppliers are exchanging information on product performance and technical breakthroughs all the time; the expo really gives them a forum in which to communicate that to their customers and potential customers.

**WQP:** *What advice would you offer attendees for making the most of their experience?*

**McCray:** The best thing is to get out of their hotel rooms, out of the

## CALENDAR

### November

**4-8 AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference & Exposition**  
Charlotte Convention Center  
Charlotte, NC  
tel: 303.794.7711  
[www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)

**7-10 AWT 2007 Water Technologies Convention & Exposition**  
The Broadmoor Resort  
Colorado Springs, CO  
tel: 301.990.9771  
[www.awt.org](http://www.awt.org)

### December

**4-7 NGWA Ground Water Expo & Annual Meeting**  
Orange County Convention Center  
Orlando, FL  
tel: 800.551.7379  
[www.ngwa.org/expo2007/main.cfm](http://www.ngwa.org/expo2007/main.cfm)

### March

**25-28 WQA Aquatech USA 2008**  
Mandalay Bay Convention Center  
Las Vegas, NV  
tel: 630.505.0160  
[www.wqa.org](http://www.wqa.org)

*For a complete list of industry events, go to [www.wqpmag.com](http://www.wqpmag.com).*

restaurants and spend their time in the exhibit hall, workshops and hallways. Go up and shake hands with someone who you have no idea who they are and introduce yourself. Find out who they are and just start talking. It's amazing what you'll learn and the relationships you can build. *wqp*

**More information about NGWA and its upcoming show is available at 800.551.7379 or [www.ngwa.org](http://www.ngwa.org).**

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