



What to expect at this year's  
WQA Mid-Year Leadership Conference

**W**ith the unique and complex challenges currently facing the water treatment industry, this year's Water Quality Association (WQA) Mid-Year Leadership Conference will provide vital education on timely issues, the opportunity to provide input into the future of the industry and learn what topics are on the horizon.

The event will be held at the Silverado Resort in Napa Valley, Calif., Sept. 10 to 12.

#### What's New

The conference will include discussion of future initiatives and projects. One such initiative currently underway is the WQA's development of an active Indian Task Force.

"A task force meeting was held in India on July 23, 2008," said Joseph F. Harrison, P.E., CWS-VI, technical director of the WQA. "One of the major points of the discussion centered on product performance standards in India. A sub task force headed by Nimish Shah of Unilever was organized to make a comprehensive study of this subject matter and to propose to the Bureau of Indian Standards the development with industry consensus of National Indian Standards for POU and POE product performances."

Govind Bommi of Filtrex Intl. currently chairs the task force, with two supporting vice chairs, Vikram Surendran of Unilever and Marzin Shroff of Eureka Forbes. Regu P. Regunathan, technical consultant to WQA, is the staff support person to this task force and Tom Palkon, director of certification at WQA, also plays a leading role, according to Harrison.

Another exciting opportunity that will be discussed is the national promotion of the industry, a subject currently being discussed by the WQA Board of Governors, Harrison said.

"Sam Karge of Pentair Residential Filtration has requested time on the agenda of the WQA Government Relations Committee meeting to discuss ideas or an idea for national promotion of our industry services. Karge is a member of [the WQA Board of Governors]. We will be anxious to hear his insights and views."

#### Proposed Softener Bans

An issue of principal importance that will be discussed at the 2008 conference will be the proposed California Legislative Assembly Bill (AB) 2270. David Loveday is scheduled to give a presentation on AB 2270 at the conference.

"This bill proposes to remove protections in present California law of fair treatment afforded to the home water softener industry," Harrison said. "It could open the door for individual communities throughout California to arbitrarily put forward debates and due process for new ordinances and new restrictions on household water softening. AB 2270, we feel, unjustly removes the present requirement in California that all sources of chloride and total dissolved solids (TDS) discharges to wastewater be identified and regulated equitably before any community can unilaterally ban or restrict self-regenerating water softeners."

#### Septic System Challenges

The topic of water softener discharges to onsite septic tank wastewater systems has been a recent concern within the industry, although that concern is declining, according to Harrison.

By Rebecca Wilhelm

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“We have seen a reduction or hiatus, it seems, during the last couple of years in proposed rules affecting water softener discharges to onsite septic tank wastewater systems,” Harrison said. “All, or at least the majority, of the state and county onsite wastewater system regulators are very aware that the WQA and National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association are now diligently cooperating to determine the truth about water softener effects, if any, on onsite wastewater treatment systems. Joint research proposals are being prepared for funding and administration by the Water Environment Research Foundation. I think all are appreciative of this good faith effort and no one is being precipitous with new actions, at least for the present.”

#### Pharmaceuticals in Water

The issue of pharmaceuticals in drinking water will also be addressed at the Mid-Year Conference. Harrison will be giving a presentation on the

subject at the joint meeting of the Manufacturers’ and Suppliers’ Section and the Retail Channel Section.

“WQA will be testifying before an Illinois Senate Committee hearing on pharmaceuticals in drinking water in September 2008,” Harrison said. “Point-of-use (POU) water treatment products are of the highest technologies and provide the best treatment and protection available to consumers for these substances. These chemicals are being found in drinking water in the part per trillion (ppt) or sometimes in the part per quadrillion levels. Water utilities and pharmaceutical interests are quick to point out how small a quantity one ppt is, e.g., one-half of an inch in the distance from the earth to the moon. But these substances may act in animal and human bodies on the molecular level. We will explain that, on the other hand, a ppt can be one million molecules in each drop of water.”

The WQA and many WQA members are currently cooperating on a task force with NSF Intl. to explore

accredited product performance standards development for POU treatment of pharmaceutical contaminants in drinking water.

#### PFCs in Drinking Water

A recent third-party study by Minnesota-based Water Science & Marketing, LLC, identified a limited number of commercially available POU treatment devices as effective for removing perfluorochemicals (PFCs) from drinking water supplies. Prior to this study, very little information was available to help a homeowner remove PFCs from their drinking water.

The WQA Gold Seal laboratory performed the laboratory bench research for the report, Harrison said.

“PFCs are an example of the many synthetic organic, endocrine-disrupting and pharmaceutical chemicals now prevalent throughout our environment. Many of them, including the PFCs, are in our drinking water supplies and even present in all of our bodies,”

Harrison said. “I think the Water Science & Marketing report is substantiation that the high water treatment technologies, such as reverse osmosis and long contact time adsorption with activated carbon and other specialty adsorbents, provide consumer protection from these materials.”

For more information, contact Joseph F. Harrison, P.E., CWS-VI, technical director of the WQA, at 630.505.0160 or by e-mail at [jharrison@wqa.org](mailto:jharrison@wqa.org). *wqp*

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