

Dealer of the Year. The votes were tallied and we announced the winning dealer at the 2009 WQA Aquatech USA tradeshow. WQP recently caught up with our winning dealer and runner up to gain insight to their success and to see what they have in store for the coming year.

By Stephanie Harris

The Runner-Up Is...

Alaska water dealer recognized by peers

With its expansive landscape, inclement weather conditions and various water contaminants, Alaska may seem like an intimidating place to be in the water treatment business. But Jon Dufendach, president of Delta Industrial Services, Inc., has found a niche providing portable design-build water systems for use at oil-drilling camps, gold-mining operations and remote villages.

"We started as a welding shop in 1997," Dufendach said. "One of our first contracts was to build a pre-designed drinking water plant for a mining exploration camp, but we were not satisfied with the water quality it produced. In an effort to understand treatment and build better plants we joined the WQA, studied their materials, attended their conventions and became certified water specialists."

At first, Delta Industrial concentrated on ozone treatment and filtration and then branched into ultraviolet treatment and membranes, primarily nanofiltration. "We emphasize arctic winter adaptations in many of our plants," Dufendach said. "We custom build most of them based on the needs of the end-user."

Business in Alaska

Located in Alaska, much of the water Delta Industrial treats is surface water such as creeks, lakes and tundra ponds, and typical issues are biological (i.e., *Cryptosporidium* and *giardia*) and heavy concentrations of organics. "Total organic carbon numbers in the 50- to 60-ppm range are not unusual," Dufendach said.



Jon Dufendach approves a new 5 gpm filtration/ozonation plant at a central Alaska mining exploration camp.

Dealing with different source waters and contaminants can be difficult when building specific systems, according to Dufendach. "[The systems] for Arctic exploration camps have to be able to treat water from multiple locations," he said. "Water is the universal solvent, so we encounter all sorts of contaminants. The balance always lies in building a system that is effective for its application yet is still cost-effective."

Running a successful business in a state such as Alaska can also provide some interesting challenges. "Alaska is the largest state and the smallest," he said, "small because there is a close-knit business community here."

As a result, Delta Industrial has to depend on referrals and word-of-mouth. "With a state population of 650,000, you quickly become well known," Dufendach said. "We're a part of a small business community and we've built a reputation of integrity and trust with our customers."

When asked if his business has been affected by the economy the way many others have this year, Dufendach explained that Alaska has a boom-and-bust economy that largely depends on the mining and oil industries, both of which have been doing well in the last few years.

"As a result, we have not experienced some of the recent difficulties some of our friends in the 'lower 48' have," Dufendach said. "Our success is based on the production of a robust, high-quality product specifically designed to solve the water problems and meet the rigors of the arctic environment at the same time." *wqp*

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