



Richard Mest

Exciting Initiatives

This spring, Richard Mest, president of Master Water Conditioning Corp., was elected president of the Water Quality Assn. (WQA). *Water Quality Products* Managing Editor Kate Cline recently spoke with Mest about what is in store in the next year for WQA and the water quality industry.

Kate Cline: What opportunities do you see in the coming year for this industry?

Richard Mest: We have seen some remarkable product innovation recently in every sector of our industry, and I believe opportunities for more innovation will only increase. This will be crucial to expanding commerce for our industry in the residential, commercial and light industrial marketplaces.

WQA will continue to grow its mission to be the voice for our industry. It has become clearer that we need a strong voice to face challenges and [create] opportunities ahead. We have a compelling story to tell, and we will increasingly build on it. We need to create a pathway to confirm new science and technology, and we must continue to prove the efficacy of point-of-entry (POE) and point-of-use (POU) water treatment products as a driving force in the world's attempt to provide safe, clean water.

Cline: What challenges do you see in the coming year?

Mest: One of our great challenges is helping elected officials and policymakers understand the importance of our role. Whenever key leaders in the nation are ignorant of our work, we face a greater danger of damaging regulation and legislation. That is why, after successful meetings on Capitol Hill in April, we are going to formalize a more permanent legislative outreach program to help all of our members to develop stronger relationships on federal, state and local levels.

We also face the challenge of products being marketed based on unproven science. One of WQA's most important missions is to provide testing and certification that will raise the level of our industry and give consumers confidence.

Cline: What new initiatives or programs is WQA planning for the next year?

Mest: Our overarching goal, in an effort to promote commerce for our membership, is to elevate WQA as the "go-to organization" for any issue related to water and water-based fluid. We're going to accomplish this through consolidating and then promoting the relevance of our product and professional certifications, legislative and regulatory outreach, final barrier education and more.

We also will be networking more with aligned water-related associations to create a common message on strategic objectives and to provide a continuity of voice at national and international levels.

Cline: What initiatives are in the works to promote final barrier?

Mest: Final barrier formed a major part of WQA Aquatech USA, helping us to launch another year of spreading the word. In our legislative outreach program, we are particularly emphasizing final barrier to help elected officials understand the reasoning and ideas behind it. Every one of us in the industry has opportunities to talk about final barrier to local decision makers and even to customers and the general public. We need to increasingly emphasize that only 1% of treated water is consumed by humans, as well as the fact that crumbling infrastructure and discovery of new contaminants will make POE/POU systems more central to the treatment paradigm in the future.

We do need to consolidate our final barrier messaging for continuity of voice, and we are doing this through new printed material and a consistent drumbeat.

Cline: How can dealers do their part to promote this industry?

Mest: The lifeblood of a strong association is active membership, and there are many ways I encourage dealers to get involved. They will be helping the industry as a whole, and also [may] find great ways to promote their businesses. To begin with, dealers should create a one-page document explaining their company and history, its products and services, its number of employees and total commerce. This will help during legislative and other outreach.

Everyone also can promote a mantra of application solutions for customers, based on real science, certified products, certified professionals and greener solutions.

And don't hesitate to brag about your WQA membership and how it empowers the consumer. Being a member helps solidify your corporate ethics and desire to be community focused, differentiates you from competition, and makes signing a contract with your firm a safe bet. *wqp*

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For more information on this subject write in 1008 on this issue's reader service card.

Report Finds 20% of Pennsylvania Wells Face High Arsenic

A report released by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) showed that one in five private wells in Pennsylvania faces elevated arsenic levels. The results highlight the importance of private well owners testing and treating their well water, USGS stated. Private wells are unregulated in Pennsylvania, and owners are responsible for testing and treating their own water, the agency noted.



Organizations to Harmonize Chemical Risk Assessment Process

To further protect public health, reduce duplicative costs, increase efficiency and promote transparency of human health risk assessment action levels, CSA Group, NSF Intl., IAPMO R&T, UL and the Water Quality Assn. (WQA) now will use harmonized procedures to develop action levels for unregulated chemical contaminants originating from products in contact with drinking water.

EPA Reaches Cleanup Agreement for New Jersey Superfund Site

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a legal agreement with SL Industries Inc. and SL Surface Technologies Inc. to perform soil cleanup and reimburse EPA's past costs at the Puchack Well Field Superfund site in Pennsauken Township, N.J. The soil to be cleaned is contaminated with hexavalent chromium and is contributing to groundwater pollution at the site. Six public drinking water supply wells near the site had to be taken out of use due to contamination.



WQA Launches Member Drive to Encourage Final Barrier

WQA announced a major new initiative to help the industry encourage the use of final barrier technologies. The new plan calls for association members to use specially designed informational materials to educate the public and key policymakers on why final barrier should be pursued. WQA has developed a consumer-friendly brochure to help explain final barrier. In addition, a new legislative outreach program will help members approach and educate local legislators.

Funding for Safe Drinking Water Left Unused

According to a recent Associated Press report, California failed to spend almost half a billion dollars of federal money meant to improve water infrastructure in the state. The fund gives loans to public and private water systems for drinking water infrastructure improvements, including treatment facilities, pipeline and other projects. *wqp*



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