



**American Water Works  
Association**

The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

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July 21, 2008

Dear Section Leaders,

At its heart, AWWA is a membership organization. Membership growth is essential to the future health and vitality of AWWA and key to section growth. More members mean more conference attendees; a greater volunteer force; a body able of intellectual property development; a stronger lobby locally and in Washington, D.C.; and a brighter future for the workforce whom safeguards public health through clean drinking water.

As I write today, we have substantial challenges to overcome to achieve this goal. In a year's time,

**AWWA has gained 5,683 new members, but we have lost 7,418 members.**

With the anticipated wave of retirements and fewer young people coming into our profession, the long-term stability of AWWA requires your active involvement.

In January, Nilaksh Kothari and I launched a Presidential Challenge to section membership committees, asking them to make membership *recruitment and retention* a top priority. I am calling on you today to help ensure the success of this effort, which is so important to the continued success of AWWA.

So what is the Presidential Challenge? To participate, sections make a target list of between five and 20 organizations. If you can bring them into the AWWA water community as paid members by December 31, 2008, the section receives 50% of the organizational member's first year dues. It's a fantastic proposition for both the section and AWWA.

Today, I ask you for your leadership in assuring the success of this Presidential Challenge by encouraging participation in your respective sections. But I'm also asking for your energy and commitment to help strengthen AWWA's overall membership rolls.

Specifically, in addition to your support of the Presidential Challenge, I would be grateful if you could use your considerable influence within your sections to:

- Make membership a key focus area for section leaders at all levels.
- Set hard targets for section membership recruitment and retention as a standard part of annual strategic planning.
- Create a section recruitment and retention action plan to achieve goals.
- Create, communicate and reinforce the value story of membership throughout all section messaging and activities.

AWWA's success in protecting public health over the past 127 years is a result of the combined strength, professionalism, and intellect of our members. With your help, we can assure that tomorrow's AWWA is strong and well-prepared to meet the challenges that await.

I look forward to hearing from you either by email, a telephone call or respond to my newly created blog that you can find at [awwa.org](http://awwa.org).

Sincerely,

Michael J. Leonard  
President

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*Communications*  
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