Optimization for Quality and Performance in the Southeast District

By Christine Gunsaullus, Entech Engineering

Early planning allowed the Spring Joint Conference for the PA-AWWA Southeast District / WWOAP Eastern Section to move forward with a record crowd intent on learning more about Optimization for Quality and Performance. Note that this was prior to “social distancing”, and when we thought copious amounts of hand sanitizer at the registration table would adequately combat the Coronavirus.

The morning was filled with regulatory and legislative updates from Patti-Kay Wisniewski (EPA), Lisa Daniels (DEP), and Serena DiMagno (SSM Group), plus a presentation by Carlos Williams and Matt Gray from HACH explaining various tools they offer to help with water quality issues, such as manganese removal.

Elections for new officers brought in a shift in leadership for the Southeast District, with Matthew Walborn (Western Berks Water Authority) taking the lead as Chair, Thomas Hanna (Aqua PA) taking over as Chair-Elect, and Chip Bilger (Western Berks Water Authority) becoming the Southeast District Trustee. Our section is grateful to Lijie Li (KCI Technologies) for continuing her exceptional work as our Secretary/Treasurer for another year.

The afternoon featured a fascinating discussion about lead in drinking water from a myriad of perspectives: George Rizzo (EPA Region 3) with a historical viewpoint, John Civardi (Mott MacDonald) sporting a periodic table tie and sharing the consulting engineering side, Bill Murray (Reading Area Water Authority) with the utility standpoint, and Herb Spencer (Shannon Chemical Corporation) giving practical advice and tools. Bill poignantly explained how their policy of replacing homeowner’s lead pipes in the City of Reading for free, “…is not about goals or regs. It’s about our kids, disadvantaged neighborhoods, and people.”

Finally, Temple University’s student chapter of Engineers Without Borders described how they help the local community in Philadelphia, as well as a small village in Peru where they designed and built a water system, complete with piping, disinfection, and a storage tank. The Southeast District was pleased to present their group with a $1,000 check to support this amazing work.

Thank you to our Premier Sponsor, Aqua Pennsylvania, for helping us keep attendance costs down for almost 200 attendees, as well as to our dozens of vendors and sponsors. We’ll see you on October 8, 2020 for our Fall Joint Conference.