

## MWOA CENTRAL SECTION MEETING

**APRIL 15, 2003**

### PAYNESVILLE MINNESOTA

The Central Section of the MWOA held its April section meeting in Paynesville on April 15, 2003, 24 members were present.

Ron Mergen started the meeting by greeting the group and introducing the Paynesville mayor, Jeff Thompson. Mr. Thompson welcomed us to his fair city and thanked the operators for their dedication and service to their communities.

Our first presentation of the day came from Team Laboratory Chemical Corporation. Terry Maier and Dave Haselhorst gave the presentation. Terry discussed the differences between Sterilants and weed killers. The products were for use in vegetation control in and around pond systems as well as other areas such as parks and fence lines. Terry discussed the importance of choosing the correct chemicals to use to when applying to soil and waters and what operators should be looking for on the labels of the containers. Dave talked to us about their products used in treatment systems, particularly in collection systems. Enzymes were the focus of Dave's discussion and how they can be used to help the operator control things like grease fats and oils in lift stations, manholes and collection systems. Dave explained how the enzymes worked and the different types available for different waste streams. This was a very informative talk by Dave and Terry and if anyone has any questions on this subject should call them directly.

Our second speaker of the morning was Chad Peterson from Safe Assure consultants, Inc. Chads topic was on confined space and trenching, "are we doing it right?" Chad claims he seldom sees anyone ever prepare for confined spaces and trenching operations completely the way the OSHA regulations state we should. Chad stated that the confined spaces, permitted-vs-nonpermitted, will almost always, for one reason or another fall under the permitted type classification in 99+ percent of the time. He explained that by simply stepping in or on the floor of most spaces you will disturb or change the atmosphere conditions making that space a permitted space. Testing the confined spaces was also discussed during his talk and Chad pointed out that the monitors need to be calibrated (fresh air = out side not inside) for every single space including the non-permitted spaces. In his opinion, Chad feels that most times operators are not meeting the OSHA requirements relating to calibration and/or use of monitoring equipment. He also reviewed a laundry list of items that make a confined space classified as a permitted space. Permits were discussed and a sample of what a good permit should look like was issued to the attendees. Hot work permits were defined as a permit required when oxygen consuming or spark producing work is being performed. Trenching operations were part of Chad's discussion and it was pointed out that, PER ENTRY, trenching is the #1 cause of worker deaths. Protective systems include sloping/benching, shoring, and shielding. A competent person was also discussed. Being unable to find a competent person in the room, Chad resorted to the textbook definition of a competent person, which in his words "is most likely to be the most experienced person on the job, not the one with the most classroom training. Once again Chad has provided us with some very good training on a subject we all need to be refreshed with.

Our third speaker came to us from Braun Pump and Controls. Dave Braun gave a talk on lift station controls and alarm systems. Dave brought a trouble shooting lift station training prop as a visual aid for his demonstration. Dave walked us through the panel and described several

situations operators may run into in the field and what they may be able to do to resolve those issues. Dave pointed out the importance of having the wiring checked by a qualified person when emergency supplies are installed to lift stations. The emergency power will have a connection with a 240V wild leg and if not properly required, it could (will) burnout the 120V system in the panel. Dave discussed intrinsically safe barriers and why they need to be installed and the associated costs of these devices. Other items reviewed were Gel cells, controllers, magnetic starters, condensate heat strips, and relays among others. Dave also talked about check valves in lift stations and was sure to point out that ball check valves DO NOT work well in the horizontal applications, and will likely fail if installed in that position, flapper type (swing checks) valves should be used in the horizontal applications. Once again, Dave provided us with an excellent training session and more information than most of us can retain, but a very good review of what we should know.

Following a very tasty lunch at the American Legion (roast beef, slaw, mashed potatoes and gravy, fresh bread – yummy!) we resumed for the afternoon session. Our only speaker of the afternoon was Becky Blue from SEH. Becky talked with us about GIS (geographic information systems) for public works systems. Becky explained to us why and how the GIS can help operators with their daily duties within their facilities and demonstrated on her computer, cities she has the system up and running. We were able to see the functionality of the GIS system and how readily the information is for operators with laptop computers in the field. Becky explained the most cost of utilizing this technology is the gathering of raw data to input into the system. The software itself is relatively cheap compared to the other associated costs of development. It was pointed out that GPS (Global Positioning Satellite systems) are often used in obtaining the raw data to input into the GIS. The associated costs were also discussed for incorporating the GIS/GPS models. Becky did an excellent job of demonstrating the use and practicality of the GIS system as a tool in assisting the operator in performing their duties.

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by chairperson Keith Redmond, in the absence of the secretary treasurer, Brian Mehr, Keith read the minutes of the last meeting, John McClouth motioned to accept the minutes as read and Ken Bakke seconded the motion, all were in favor and the minutes were approved.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Keith Redmond gave an update on the Annual conference in July to be held in Moorhead. The new Marriot hotel in Moorhead will be the location of the training. Be sure to register early and reserve your room. Elk River was recognized for receiving 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the national award for maintenance in a medium sized facility. This award was actually received two years ago by the facility, congratulations to Elk River and its wastewater treatment plant personnel!

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

John McClouth addressed the membership as a member of the certification committee. John is a member the committee as a citizen representative. John brought up several issues about member certification ranging from a special “E” license to address operators not working a “D” wastewater systems, but should have some type of licensure. Also brought up was what type of facilities should this new proposed licensure be allowed to operate? John also brought up the

idea of reinstating the “operator in training” idea, that is, if an operator holds a lower class license at a facility than what the facility is rated, should they be able to test to the next higher level license before they meet the experience and education requirements with the stipulation that that licensure is only good at that facility. In a nutshell, a lengthy discussion with not a whole lot of agreement took place. John was given some direction as to the feeling of the group towards the issues addressed and he will pass those feelings on the certification council. Elections were held of the vacancy created by the outgoing chair position. Brian Mehr will move into the chair position for the upcoming year, which created an opening for the secretary treasure position. Keith Redmond nominated Ron Mergen from Paynesville and Ken Bakke nominated Dave Robasse from Buffalo. Dave declined the nomination. After three more calls for further nomination, Keith Redmond closed nominations for the secretary/treasure position. Having only one candidate for the position, John McClouth motioned for a white ballot to be cast, Ken Bakke seconded it and the motion passed with no dissensions. Congratulations Ron and good luck!

Meeting dates for our next meeting were discussed without any firm commitments. GLSSD is looking at possibly hosting the upcoming June meeting and Buffalo is considering the September meeting. St. Cloud will once again be hosting the December meeting. Check the MWOA web site for the next scheduled meeting. Meetings are held the second Tuesday for the month. If anyone else is willing to host a meeting please contact Keith Redmond (320-654-5952) we would greatly appreciate anyone’s willingness to volunteer their site for the meetings.

Keith Redmond provided information on the Water Environment Technologies program and informed the group that the St. Cloud program location is full with a waiting list for the fall 2003 start, while the metro location is still waiting to be filled. Students will be graduating in early July from both sites. Tri-fold flyers were printed and are available if anyone is interested in handing out this information at their facilities, city halls or on career days, please contact Keith Redmond or Bill Spain if you are willing to distribute this material. The Water Environment Technologies has recently posted a web site for the program and can be seen at <http://wett.sctc.edu> (no laughing it is my first web page). If anyone has suggestions for the web page please let us know.

John McClouth made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ron Mergen seconded the motion, meeting adjourned. Tours were provided for at the WWTF.

Thanks to the City of Paynesville, Ron Mergen and his staff for putting on a great training session, and for those of you who were unable to attend I encourage you to make a strong effort to attend the section meetings as very good training has been provided at these meeting in the past few years at a very affordable price. I look forward to seeing all of you at our next meeting in June.

Respectfully submitted:

Keith Redmond (for Brian Mehr)  
Chair, Central Section MWOA