

# Historical Drinking Water Week Awards

**2024**

## Commitment to Excellence



### **Bob Bell, Construction Superintendent, Washington Water Service**

With thirty years of commitment to safe drinking water, Bob's customers enjoy the highest standards in facility maintenance and upgrades, along with outstanding records of monitoring and sampling compliance. Bob is a mentor and shares his knowledge and expertise freely. His calm example in emergency situations gives coworkers the confidence they need to respond efficiently and restore safe drinking water quickly.

### **Sam Camp, Senior Technical Advisor for Water Reliability Projects, Hanford Mission Integration Solutions**

Sam began his career at the Hanford site in May 1977 starting as a drinking water operator. He was quickly promoted to field work supervisor. He has filled many roles for the Hanford Site over the years, including the water and sewer utilities group. He has navigated challenges with expertise and knowledge, handling water system outages, demands from multiple nuclear facilities, and an ever-changing political climate.



### **Jim Campbell, Director of Field Operations, Thurston PUD No. 1**

The Thurston PUD Board of Commissioners passed Resolution 24-07 on February 13, 2024, endorsing Jim's nomination for this award. Jim joined the PUD in 2017, eventually being promoted to his present position. He is an excellent leader and mentor for his staff, coworkers, and other drinking water professionals. Jim promotes conservation programs and green energy, working to reduce leaks in the system and using solar technology. He is a tireless public servant.

### **Dylan Bailey, Field Superintendent, King County Water District 125, Tukwila**

Dylan's dedication to ensuring delivery of safe and reliable drinking water to the community of Tukwila and surrounding cities is commendable. He is proactive and goes beyond minimal requirements, which shows his dedication to excellence. He coaches and mentors his staff and shares his knowledge and expertise. Through his influence, his team trained to respond to nearly every water-related emergency and now handles those tasks in-house.



## Grace Under Pressure

### Damon Stevens, Operator, Lewis County Water Sewer District 6

Damon operates multiple water and sewer systems and has upgraded problem areas throughout the systems. He developed risk analysis that will guide future capital investment and process development. Damon remains calm under duress and works diligently until water is restored. He uses these challenges as opportunities to expand his knowledge and skill. He is a natural mentor, using teaching moments to educate and inform interns, coworkers, commissioners, and residents understand the complex process of operating a drinking water system and providing safe and reliable water.

## Lifetime Achievement



### Randy Black, Consulting Manager; Lakewood Water District

Randy has worked at the district for nearly forty years, including twenty-nine years as general manager. He oversaw the implementation of chlorination and cross-connection control. He was instrumental in the district becoming a water provider to multiple systems in Pierce County. He advocated for regional planning and cooperation and has been a significant leader with the Regional Water Cooperative of Pierce County. He is a leader with the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the South Sound Subsection of PNWS-AWWA. He was a faithful, effective, and consistent leader in the drinking water industry.

### Tonilee Hanson, Spokane Aquifer Joint Board (SAJB) Program Manager

Tonilee was program manager for the SAJB since 2011. The SAJB is comprised of 21 water purveyors throughout the Spokane area. She also provided administrative support for the Idaho Washington Aquifer Collaborative (IWAC) since 2013. She was instrumental in developing, implementing, managing and organizing education and awareness campaigns, grant applications and funding, special reports and services, and multimedia presentations and marketing. She received the Ty Wick Defend of the Aquifer Award in 2022. Her colleagues describe her as irreplaceable with a heart and drive for going above and beyond the call of duty.



## Director's Award, Friend to Drinking Water



### Steve Hulsman, ODW Source (Chemical) Monitoring Program Manager, Northwest Regional Office

Many of you worked directly with Steve over the past 38 years and his sudden loss December 2023 hit hard with many of us. He had deep passion for his work and was eager to share his enthusiasm, expertise, and commitment to good science. Steve appreciated his colleagues, and when differing opinions arose, he expressed gratitude for the chance to engage in discussions. Steve always said, "there is never a dull day" in public health, and he appreciated the "job security" of ongoing challenges. When National Drinking Water Week rolled around this year, we wanted to honor Steve's legacy of customer service and professionalism. We are all committed to keeping the torch of his memory alive every day through excellent service to the drinking water community.



## Commitment to Excellence



### John Anderson, Water Treatment/Water Quality Superintendent, Sammamish Plateau, Water and Sewer District.

John Anderson has been a valued member of Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District for 35 years. He built his knowledge base and is now the water expert at the district. He is a key operations person in design projects, including the seismic improvement work done at multiple district reservoirs. He is instrumental in the district meeting all drinking water requirements. John freely shares his expertise, mentoring coworkers and helping other water systems.

### Kevin Cook, Treatment Plant Operator for Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District, Bellingham.

Kevin operates and maintains three Group A water systems and consistently meets all monitoring and reporting requirements. Through Kevin's hard work and management, the South Shore Water System's treatment plant received DOH's Treatment Optimization Program (TOP) award for a record twenty-one years. His implementation of the Water Use Efficiency (WUE) program resulted in water loss going down even though the system size increased. Kevin ensures his legacy of excellence is passed on to the next generation of operators by mentoring his coworkers.



### Wyatt Long, Public Works Manager, City of Rock Island.

Wyatt manages this rural city's water system with limited support staff and does most of the work alone. He takes water quality samples, submits reports, monitors the wells, responds to customer requests, along with the thousands of other tasks required to run a water system. He is focused on water conservation and dedicated to finding leaks and repairing them. During a power outage, Wyatt slept outside the main well to ensure the generator continued running. This kept the pump going and prevented the system from losing pressure. His community never ran out of water and didn't have to face the difficulties brought on by loss of pressure in the system.

### Scott Dixon, General Manager, Dallesport Water District, Dallesport.

Scott's career spans more than 42 years. The system was out of compliance and undergoing an audit when Scott was hired. He successfully identified key problems and instituted corrective actions. He brought the system up to standard with DOH requirements and regulations. He formed a budget committee to address the district's financial needs. He implemented a rate increase study, made recommendations, and convinced the board to apply the increase. He focused on in-house repairs and engineering, which saved the district money. Scott shares his expertise with other small water systems in the area, ensuring safe and reliable drinking water for surrounding, rural communities.



## Above and Beyond



### Christopher Roblin, Ferry County.

Successful public health outcomes rely on effective cooperation and partnerships among various regulatory agencies, water system operators, and the communities they serve. Christopher exemplifies that success. He is responsible for bringing out-of-compliance systems back into compliance with state regulations and requirements. Ferry county had taken over many small, at-risk, and failing water systems. Christopher turned them all around



and they now produce safe and reliable drinking water for their customers. He worked hard and added Wastewater Operator certification to his skills so that he could oversee all aspects of these communities' water systems. His actions ensure public health now and for future generations in these communities.

## Grace Under Pressure



### **Joe Grogan, Public Works Director, Town of Coupeville.**

Joe started his career as Utility Supervisor in 2016 as the Navy confirmed PFAS contamination in the Town of Coupeville's newest drinking water well. Joe became an expert on PFAS contaminants, testing, state and federal regulations, treatment operations, and more. He acted as liaison between the Navy and the town, communicating complex information in a transparent and understandable way. He created a calm environment and gained the trust of the community, the press, and the Navy. Joe was recently promoted to Public Works Director and continues to oversee capital projects, the utility crew, and all while keeping current with emerging state and federal PFAS regulations.

## Lifetime Achievement

### **John Lovie, former Whidbey Island Water System Association President.**

John also served on other boards and committees, including the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WIWSA). He founded and still runs the WIWSA newsletter, which covers topics like emerging contaminants, regulations, and available funding. He also served on nine local community scientific organizations, providing expertise and hours of his time. He is passionate about water conservation and works tirelessly to advocate for the preservation of natural resources. John is involved with the PFAS response and is a member of the PFAS Chemical Action Plan Advisory Committee, making recommendations to the Department of Ecology. It also works to ensure safe drinking water, managing environmental contamination, and reduce PFAS in products available to consumers. John's work encompasses the whole of Island County, not just his own community.



### **Mark "Bubba" Scott, Water System Manager, Pend Oreille PUD 1.**

Mark celebrates more than thirty years in the drinking water industry. He is responsible for nine water systems and their communities. He worked tirelessly to secure over \$5 million in grant funds for projects that were vital for maintaining the health and safety of poor, rural communities. He is responsible for major construction of water treatment facilities, wells, chemical treatment systems, along with various studies, cross connection control, and well head protection programs. He has served on numerous committees, most recently as a Governor appointee to the Washington State Public Works Board. His influence will carry into the future with the capable operators who follow in his legacy of excellence.

### **Tim McMurrin, former Water/Wastewater Operator for Klickitat PUD.**

Tim began his career with Klickitat PUD in April 2001 and learned his craft hands-on. He was proficient at taking tests and shared his knowledge with new operators, mentoring them. He reached out to help all who needed it and covered coworkers' weekend duty, responded to alarms in his off hours, and helped customers. He had an exemplary work ethic and cared deeply about his family and coworkers. He passed suddenly from a heart attack and is greatly missed by everyone who knew him.





### **Sue Kennedy, Water Program Senior Environmental Health Specialist, Lewis County Health.**

Sue dedicated 29 years to ensuring safe and reliable drinking water for the people of Lewis County. Her unwavering commitment to public health has had a significant impact on the community. Her expertise in the field is unmatched. She works tirelessly to identify and address potential water contamination sources, and she's helped bring millions in funding to assist Lewis County public water systems. She's active in her community in other ways and serves in local organizations, schools, and community groups. She collaborates with other professionals to develop beneficial policies and regulations. She is highly respected by those inside and outside her field as she raises awareness of the importance of safe and reliable drinking water to community health and financial vitality.

## **2022**

### **Above and Beyond**

#### **Kathy and Oz Noboru Ausley, co-managers Bethel Green Acres Water Association, Spanaway, Pierce County.**

Kathy and Oz look forward to retiring from their 24/7 job operating this small, aging, and high maintenance community water system. They have given up holidays, driven miles for parts, and worked through the last two years of the pandemic, showing unfailing dedication and loyalty to their community.

### **Commitment to Excellence**

#### **Tom Krebs, Water Treatment Plant Supervisor, City of Walla Walla.**

Tom's career spans over thirty years. His dedication and commitment to delivering safe and reliable drinking water was challenged in the extreme drought of last year. The water system uses different drinking water sources, surface water and ground water, which require different types of treatment. Tom skillfully determines appropriate supply and treatment to meet demands. He also oversees watershed protection, coordinating with other agencies to protect the surface water safe source.

#### **Chris Orkney, Lead Operator, Naselle Water Company.**

Chris leads and mentors other operators, sharing his knowledge and skills. He is proactive, always looking and planning ahead—an important skill when dealing with the unique challenges of maintaining surface water quality.

#### **James Jensen, Operations Manager, Washington Water Service.**

James comes to work each day and asks, "What can we do better?" He created new monitoring schedules and found ways to evaluate and improve source water and distribution processes to better serve his customers and always ensure the highest quality water.

### **Friend of Drinking Water**

#### **Arnica Briody, Environmental Health Specialist, Chelan-Douglas Health District.**

Arnica began a project to track 450 Group B water systems and find those that should be classified as Group A. She combed through data and historical and sometimes incomplete records to trace use and ownership. Her dedication to this project helps guard the health of those living in Chelan and Douglas counties by ensuring clean, safe, and dependable drinking water.



## Grace Under Pressure

### **Tom Martin, Water and Wastewater Systems Manager, Clallam PUD #1.**

Flooding caused a landslide across Highway 12 into Clallam county last year, damaging a pump station and breaking a waterline that supplied water to reservoirs for Sekiu and Clallam Bay. Tom jumped into action, working tirelessly, and coordinating with multiple agencies so that the two communities had access to safe drinking water until the slide materials could be cleared and repairs made.

## Most Innovative

### **Jude Grounds, Senior Project Manager, Carollo.**

Jude led the utility coordination effort during the regional chlorine supply disruption last year. He organized and facilitated multiple calls and meetings involving many large drinking water systems throughout Washington and Oregon. He helped initiate conversations and collaboration between drinking water utilities and state agencies. Many of the large utilities were able to coordinate resources critical to drinking water treatment.

## Perserverance Under Adversity

### **Mark Combs, Water operator, Rumbolz Sunset Water Association.**

Mark stepped up to the challenge when asked to take on a badly run and neglected water system. He cleaned up the system, repaired numerous mechanical failures and leaking distribution pipes. He also helped the community-run water system plan for the future instead of reacting to emergencies.

## 2021

## Lifetime Achievement Award Winners—For Those Retiring

### **Michael Williams, Water Treatment Manager, City of Sultan**

Mike has been with the City of Sultan for 21 years. His work ethic, knowledge, and dedication are unmatched. He is ready and able to do whatever it takes to keep safe, reliable water flowing for all of Sultan's customers.

### **Kenneth Unkrur, Water Operations Foreman, Parkland Light & Water (PL&W), Tacoma**

Ken's main focus after 30 years is upgrading PL&W's water system, a major overhaul project with many complex components. Ken works harder than ever as he nears retirement and is an example and mentor to younger coworkers in the drinking water industry

### **James W. Miller, City Engineer, City of Everett Public Works**

Over his career, Jim led and managed water-related agencies and staff, including Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) and Lakehaven Water and Sewer District. He is a lifetime American Water Works Association member. His legacy is innovation and dedication to water resource management and environmental stewardship. Through his leadership, Everett and surrounding water utilities are better equipped to meet future growth and resiliency needs. He is a regional resource in water rights, water supply contracts, and water utility management.



## **Mark Sadler, Operations Superintendent, City of Everett Public Works**

Mark has had a significant impact over 24 years of service. He oversaw many new programs and standard operating procedures. He initiated and developed new ideas to solve existing challenges, and replacing and updated many of the water systems components. Mark leaves a legacy of commitment and dedication to ensure safe drinking water for all of Everett's customers. He is a trusted colleague, mentor, supervisor, leader, box, advisor, and friend to many. His dedication inspires others to be at their best.

## **Tracy Valentine, Supervisor, City of Leavenworth Water Treatment Plant**

Tracy has worked for the City of Leavenworth for over 25 years as a water treatment operator. She recently became the Supervisor of the Water Treatment Plant, a well-deserved promotion. Tracy passed the Level 3 Water Treatment Plant Operator test with flying colors. Her attitude is always stellar and she always strives to make the best tasting drinking water for her customers.

## **Fred Pardini, Water Treatment Manager, City of West Richland**

With more than 30 years with the City of West Richland's Public Works Department, Fred is dedicated, passionate and tireless in his efforts to maintain safe drinking water standards. He has been instrumental in development and implementation of initiatives, programs, establishing standard operating procedures, and capitol improvements to enhance the overall efficiency, effectiveness, capacity, and water quality. During the 2020 pandemic, a series of events nearly led to a state of emergency with strict water rationing. Due to Fred's actions, the need for the emergency declaration was averted. Fred is a mentor and example for future waterworks operators in protection water resources and providing clean, safe, reliable drinking water for West Richland.

## **John Kounts, Water Program Director, Washington Public Utility Districts Association**

John has helped ODW staff understand the impact and obligations we have as regulators with water utilities. He is a leader among decision makers and elected official to find or create infrastructure funding. He works with our Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program to help small water systems find solution or consolidate with larger systems. He has been instrumental in helping DWSRF receive two recent legislative appropriations and other EPA grant money. He will be greatly missed.

## **Commitment to Excellence Award Winners**

### **Jared Alexander, Water Quality and Engineering Technician, Mukilteo Water and Wastewater District**

During this past year Jared went above and beyond his duties in the midst of the pandemic. He stepped up to supervise a team in the field, while continuing to provide clean and safe drinking water for his customers. Jared also completed the first phase of the Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal Project, which included a complex water system with many challenges. Jared's commitment is motivating to those around him in the office and the field.

### **Regional Water Cooperative of Pierce County (RWCP)**

RWCP led the way when it established a monthly networking and knowledge-sharing forum in 1991, which has grown over the years. Through collaboration and diligence, RWCP addresses challenges to local utilities through the forum including water quality, legislation, emergency preparedness, and more. They are a unique action-oriented organization, dedicated to helping and sharing the best management practices. Pierce County residents enjoy better drinking water due to the work of the RWCP.



### **Cody Kamke, Water Foreman, Peninsula Light Company, Gig Harbor**

Cody exemplifies excellence in his work each day. He is most concerned with providing safe and reliable drinking water to Peninsula Light Company customers. He goes the extra mile to comply with state and local regulations and provides strong leadership. He sets an excellent example of a water works operator to his colleagues.

### **James Brennan, Water Manager, Driftwood Valley Association, Yelm**

James is the sole operator for a small system in Yelm. The system faced lead and copper challenges and James educated and guided home owners through the issue until the system reached compliance. He's dealt with other challenges and the daily monitoring with diligence. James also has been active in starting a conservation program during hot months and educating residents. Finally, he is an example of how to conduct business during a pandemic, guiding others on social distancing and wearing personal protection equipment.

### **Jerry Goertz, President, Deep Creek Ranchette's Water Association, Medical Lake**

Jerry has been president for over ten years and continually strives to improve and update the water system. He established an annual preventative maintenance program, created a water conservation program to lower water usage by two million gallons a year. He works with local, county, state, and federal officials concerning the PFAS/PFOA contamination from nearby Fairchild Air Force Base. He also brought the system onto social media to keep in touch with water association members.

### **Aaron Harwood, Public Works Superintendent, City of George**

Mr. Harwood displays diligence and dedication while controlling the water quality for the City of George. All water sampling and reports are completed in a timely manner. His dedication, knowledge, and understanding of how important clean, safe drinking water is to the city's customers make him a standout superintendent.

## **Grace Under Pressure**

### **Brenda Smith, President, Holiday Hills Community Club, Eatonville**

The president job is a volunteer position with a typical small, rural community water system with many challenges and old infrastructure. Brenda uses her leadership skills to keep the water system going. She set up a successful customer late payment plan and educated the community on the need to address the failing infrastructure. She worked with other volunteers to map the entire distribution system, no easy task. During the pandemic, when the well pump failed, she worked tirelessly to find a trucked water supply so that families would be able to wash their hands and keep their homes clean.

### **Alice Campbell, Environmental Health Specialist, Northeast Tri-County Health District.**

Alice conducts sanitary surveys of water systems on behalf of the Department of Health and had to navigate a 50 percent increase in workload in 2020 in addition to her normal duties. Timely and effective survey work would be an accomplishment on its own, but Alice was also frequently called away as part of the Health District's COVID response. Her ability to produce excellent work while balancing frequently changing duties and priorities epitomizes "grace under pressure."

## **Friend of Drinking Water Award Winner**

### **Richmond Petty, Environmental Health Manager, Chelan Douglas Health District**

Richmond has done an excellent job working with the Office of Drinking Water on conducting Sanitary Surveys. He gives clear attention to detail on the Sanitary Survey reports. He communicates very clearly



with our office and does a great job of getting the survey reports completed within the thirty day requirement. With additional pandemic duties keeping the health district staff busy, Richmond stand out with his dedication to protecting public health with safe, dependable drinking water.

## **Operator of the Year Award Winner**

### **Von Eggers, Water Plant Operator, City of Richland**

During Von's career, he has seen numerous facility upgrades and process improvements. With his water system experience and knowledge, it seems as though he has his finger on the collective pulse of the water treatment plant and distribution system. He is a resource for other operators when process changes are being considered and displays patience and encouragement when sharing his knowledge. He is known for his preparedness, leaving subsequent shifts with excellent operating situations. He is a reliable and valuable asset for the City of Richland.

## **2020**

## **Lifetime Achievement Award Winners**

### **Dan Kegley, Director of Water and Hydroelectric Services, City of Spokane**

Dan has served nearly thirty years with the City of Spokane, starting as a laborer and equipment operator, earning certifications and working his way to director. He has overseen many vital initiatives, such as removal of all lead services lines in Spokane, establishment of a safe and reliable drinking water intertie with a struggling neighboring system, and provision of bottled water to a small community that temporarily lost their only source of water. In addition, Mr. Kegley mentors future water operators, volunteers in many capacities with many water-related organizations, and is passionate about protecting one of our most precious resources—water.

### **Mary Howell, Chief Operating Officer, Backflow Management Inc.**

Nominated for her superior contributions Mary is passionate and dedicated to the education and excellence of waterworks operators and environmental professionals. Mary is an innovative leader, helping many Washington communities achieve and maintain clean, safe drinking water through instruction and leadership to their certified waterworks operators. Mary's commitment is why Washington state has such highly qualified and knowledgeable water industry experts. Mary is a member of many professional waterworks associations and travels throughout the nation providing training, consulting, and delivering presentations and classes. Through her work, Mary goes above and beyond to protect public health.

### **Chuck Clark, Chief Executive Officer, retired, Cascade Water Alliance, Woodinville**

Chuck Clark led and managed water-related agencies and staff at local, state, and federal agencies for nearly fifty years. He leaves a legacy of innovation and dedication to stewardship of our water resources. Cascade Water Alliance is a unique municipal corporation of five cities and two water and sewer districts in east and south King County. He is responsible for successful laws allowing water utilities to combine efforts in providing water services more efficiently and effectively; as well as protections for water districts and cities that provide fire protection services. He has dedicated his working life to ensuring regional water supply resiliency and sustainability.

### **Bob Hunter, General Manager, Kitsap Public Utility District, Poulsbo**

Working for Kitsap Public Utility District for almost 35 years, Bob Hunter has risen from operator to general manager. He has overseen extensive growth of the district's drinking water utility, which currently owns and operates 28 Group A water systems and 25 Group B water systems. During



Bob's tenure, the utility worked closely with Department of Health staff to assist and consolidate troubled water systems in Kitsap County, contributing to the public health of the communities involved. Furthermore, Bob pushed for upgrades to the treatment plant to be more protective of the groundwater and ensure a sustainable supply of safe, clean water. Bob is also involved in many local groups related to safe and sustainable water sources on the peninsula.

## Friend of Drinking Water

### Jon Ness, Environmental Health Director, Colville

Only ODW staff can nominate individuals for the Friend of Drinking Water award. Jon recently moved from Grant County Health to the Northeast Tri-County Health District. Jon was nominated due to his outstanding enthusiasm to advance the interests of sustainable drinking water and emphasize its critical importance to healthy communities. He is dedicated and tireless in his efforts to maintain safe drinking water standards. He is an excellent mentor to many staff and coworkers, and takes special care advancing ODW programs and standards for providing safe, clean, reliable drinking water.

## Operator of the Year

### Dave Muto, Operations Planning & System Control Manager, Seattle Public Utilities

Seven people nominated Dave Muto for the Operator of the Year award. Dave was the point person for a staggering array of new construction projects in the Seattle metro area. Updating and upgrading water system controls, flow-testing, and integration of a new UV treatment plant are just a few of the projects he was in charge of. He is also noted for his dedication to teaching and mentoring his employees. He selflessly shares his time and knowledge, and encourages his employees to grow and move into leadership positions. He remains calm in crises and his deep understanding of the water systems were critical in ensuring uninterrupted service during several emergency events. Mr. Muto embodies the core values of public health and safety.

## Commitment to Excellence

### Jim Patton, Executive Director, Whidbey Island Water System Association, Coupeville

Jim Patton is recognized for his long history of community service, his leadership, character, and insight. After retiring from the Port of Coupeville, Jim stepped up as executive director for his community's water system. Whidbey Island's access to potable water is a challenge and Jim found innovative solutions to the serious problems faced by the water association. He often brings together state, county, and local water system staff to address issues faced by the water system. He also educates the public and association members about water quality issues and, thanks to his tireless efforts and insight, his community can rely on safe, clean water.

## Perseverance Under Adversity

### Windolph Water Association, Olympia

The Windolph Association took ownership of their water system after a series of violations and orders to install disinfection and maintain pressure failed. The existing well had a three-gallon-per-minute (gpm) capacity and the reservoir could not maintain pressure at the upper homes. Twenty-seven homeowners took on a three-year challenge of identifying and obtaining an easement for a new well. They used funds from our Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to drill a new water source, which produced a 40gpm flow, but could not maintain sufficient system pressure. They used another DWSRF loan to build a new reservoir. The community members spent countless hours working together with their operator, consultants, and ODW staff to ensure safe and reliable drinking water for all of the homes in their community.



## 2019

### Lifetime Achievement

#### **Peggy Barton, Director, Washington Certification Services at Auburn Green River College**

Peggy oversees administration of the Department of Health's professional growth program for certified water works operators, its annual renewal program, and backflow assembly testers' certification program. For over 35 years, her commitment, high standards, and dedication to contemporary training programs, with clear and relevant instruction resulted in highly trained, exceptionally competent waterworks operators for Washington state.

#### **Paul Robischon, retired from Washington Water Services**

During his tenure at Washington Water Services, Paul initiated and developed many new ideas to solve existing challenges that were efficient and also made it safer for personnel. One of his ideas changed the way a tank manufacturer sealed the topmost joint between the tank wall and roof. Paul's resourcefulness brought him to the attention of regulators and he was asked to serve on several Department of Health (DOH) committees. He also taught at DOH-sponsored trainings. His career was marked by service, teaching, and mentoring others in the water industry.

#### **Kathleen Cahall, retired Bremerton Water Resources Manager**

During Kathleen's tenure, Bremerton's drinking water system received multiple state and federal awards for excellence. She was proactive in protecting Bremerton's source water, initiating many measures to ensure the safety and security of the Union River watershed. She was instrumental in improving the distribution system and maintaining regulatory compliance, working well with Department of Health regional engineers. Kathleen was a proven leader and the public face of the utility, which serves over 55,000 people, as well as the Puget Sound Navy Shipyard. She was an outstanding mentor to her staff and cared about customer concerns, public outreach, and education.

### Commitment to Excellence

#### **City of Spokane Water Department**

Spokane Water Department serves about 230,000 customers, some who had lead service lines. The city completed removal of all lead service lines ahead of the schedule in the Governor's Directive on Lead, at no cost to homeowners, even for portions of lead service lines located on private property. They are also good neighbors to the City of Airway Heights, whose primary wells were contaminated with PFOS/PFOA. Dan Kegley, Director of Water/Wastewater, and his staff initiated a temporary intertie, providing safe drinking water, and helped with fill stations and other needs until the crisis was past.

#### **Emilia Blake, Water Quality Coordinator, Skagit Public Utilities**

Emilia heads up the drinking water laboratory and is responsible for water quality at the water treatment plant and distribution system, where she performs at an exemplary level. She is responsible for lab accreditations and procedural efficiencies, such as upgrading and maintaining instrumentation equipment. She conducts extra research to enhance water treatment plant operation and optimization projects. Emilia also spearheaded a proactive effort in preventing water quality issues with the PUD's reservoir. She earned this award through her dedication, attention to details, and going above and beyond her job duties.

#### **Dave Brown, Yakima Assistant Public Works Director**

Dave began his career as a Water Treatment Plant Supervisor and worked his way up to his present position. He teaches certification training and is invested in his staff's advancement and career goals. He



provides steady, reliable leadership in times of crisis. In addition, he chairs the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Water Use committee and is a board member of several other entities and boards. Dave played a key role recently in assisting two failing water systems overcome adverse conditions and find a safe, reliable water source.

## **Most Innovative**

### **City of Anacortes**

When the city water department was tasked with updating its telemetry to fiber optics, options were limited. They discovered a method used in Europe installing micro-duct into active water lines. After research and design adjustments, Brent Christensen, Water Distribution Lead, along with his crew, were able to deploy roughly 15 miles of micro-duct efficiently. It was an extensive process that included installing breakouts and handhelds to divert around existing valves and elbows. They were able to improve on the original idea, saving time and money, while ensuring continually high water quality.

## **2018**

## **Grace Under Pressure**

### **Mike LaScuola, Technical Advisor Environmental Resources, Spokane Regional Health District**

In May 2017, Fairchild Air Force Base found significant levels of perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the City of Airway Heights drinking water wells. Customers received bottled water and were asked to not drink the well water. Mike was a key player in the response, handling calls from concerned citizens, interacting with the media, and coordinating with ODW. PFAS was later discovered in privately-owned wells. Mike continued working with private well owners, answering questions and assisting with sampling while coordinating with ODW.

## **Above and Beyond**

### **Jennifer McDonell-Evans, Water System Superintendent, Curlew Kai Home Owners Association Water System**

Jennifer led a nearly \$1 million construction project to build two new water tanks, a well, and pumping equipment. During construction, a fire broke out. The HOA Board nominated Jennifer for her help with coordinating the firefighting effort. Thanks to her quick work, she helped save the HOA's newly installed equipment.

## **Lifetime Achievement**

### **Martin Sebren, Kitsap Public Utilities District, Retired**

Martin oversees the PUD's hydrologic monitoring network. This network records surface water and groundwater levels throughout the county. Using this information, Martin ensures that more than 50 water systems continue to have safe, reliable drinking water.

### **Mark Weeks, City of Everett, Retired**

During his time with the city, he was also a plant operator, lab manager, and distribution manager. ODW staff nominated Mark for his role in developing many programs and standard operating procedures. In addition, ODW staff noted Mark's work to optimize the plant's water treatment process, and the knowledge he freely shared with other operators and water systems.



## Commitment to Excellence

### Carol Schlender, Water Quality Manager, Washington Water Service

Washington Water Service manages several water systems in Western Washington. ODW staff nominated Carol for her attention to detail, dedication to staying on top of drinking water regulations, and meticulous record keeping.

### Doug Quinn, Director of Water Services, Clark Public Utilities

Under Doug's direction, Clark Public Utilities serves more than 80,000 customers. Under Doug's leadership, Clark Public Utilities won the J.D. Power Award for Customer Satisfaction in each of the last ten years.

## 2017

### Lifetime Achievement

#### Mike Stevens, City of Camas, Retired

Mike Stevens retired from the City of Camas after working his way up to Water Supervisor for the city. He realized the value of safe, reliable drinking water and always worked toward the goal of a healthy water infrastructure; gaining knowledge and collaborating with others. Mike was valued throughout the industry, with regulators and his colleagues alike, for his insight, experience, and integrity. We congratulate Mike on his retirement, he will be greatly missed.

#### Paul Reeb, City of Kelso, Retired

Paul Reeb retired after a successful career spanning forty years. Under his leadership, the City of Kelso won water optimization awards for each of the past ten years, which resulted in the presentation of a Gold Award. For three years running, the Kelso water plant has been the top-ranked surface water plant. During his tenure, Paul committed to going above and beyond to ensure safe and reliable drinking water. He is well respected for his honesty, integrity, and commitment to public health.

### Operator of the Year

#### Bill Maxwell, Operator and Water Quality Specialist, City of Pasco

Bill Maxwell is a great role model and educator; committed to expertise in water treatment and quality. He uses his knowledge and skill to assist other water systems as well as further the education and growth of other operators and field staff. Bill has also coordinated school field trips and successfully engaged second graders, getting them excited about the importance of water treatment—no small feat.

### Grace Under Pressure

#### Wayne Braun, Enterprise Estates

Wayne Braun was honored for his dedication in serving the Enterprise Estates water system in Ferndale. He worked for over two decades providing safe and reliable drinking water to his customers and neighbors. During a recent windstorm, which knocked out the power to the well, Wayne monitored the generator throughout the day and night, even though trees were falling on the lots adjacent to the well and kept the water flowing. He is proud that at 75 years old he continues to obtain water works certifications in order to serve his community.



## Perseverance Under Adversity

### The Greater Bar Water District

Staff at the Greater Bar Water District worked hard to consolidated other, smaller water systems during a major construction project. Doing so eliminated a problematic, failed water system that had been on a health advisory for over a decade. By consolidating and obtaining permits to expand, the District has put public health first, boosting the economic benefits to the communities they serve.

## Above and Beyond

### Betty Vance, Valley Water District

Before she retired, Betty was instrumental in forming the Valley Water District near Puyallup and consolidating various smaller water systems. She excelled in leadership and communicating the value of a healthy water infrastructure and the need for sound financial and managerial plans. She used her educational and negotiating skills to work with Department of Health staff in applying successful business models to centralize the water management of smaller systems.

## 2016

## Grace Under Fire

### Ron Slabaugh, P.E., Chelan County PUD

Ron's heroic efforts kept the water running while firefighters battled the Sleepy Hollow wildfires that threatened Wenatchee homes and businesses last June. While Ron and his coworkers were checking the water system for available water reserves, another fire erupted at a recycling facility across the street, creating another front for firefighters and complicating the amount of water needed. By using PUD backup wells, Wenatchee City water, and other water resources, Ron and his team supplied six million gallons of water—enough to fight the fires and keep the water system pressurized.

## Friends of Drinking Water

### Roger Maurer, Project Manager Engineer, Cowlitz County Public Works

### Kenneth Stone, Project Manager Engineer, Cowlitz County Public Works

Teresa Walker, engineer in our Southwest Regional office, recognized Roger and Kenneth for their hard work bringing the Columbia Crest Estates water system into compliance with the arsenic rule, a years-long challenge. Maurer and Stone, with the Cowlitz County Public Works Department, took on this long-term project, coordinating the planning and work, and applying for and managing the funding.

## Above and Beyond

### Charles H. Belvin, Columbia Crest Estates Water Association

Charles lives in the Columbia Crest Community. He was retired—until the water system had arsenic problems. He became a water system expert and organized the residents into a water association to take over the water system. For seven-plus years, he worked with the Office of Drinking Water, Cowlitz Public Works, and others to solve the arsenic problem.

### Mark Leenhouts, Fairchild Mobile Home Community Water System

Mark owns and operates the Fairchild Mobile Home Community Water System. Last November, after the worst Spokane-area windstorm on record, Leenhouts and his sons worked around the clock to fuel



the generators to keep the water and sewer systems from freezing. Leenhouts used his own resources to provide heaters and fuel for residents who sheltered in place. His efforts prevented significant damage to the water system, sewer discharge system, and residents' homes.

## **Commitment to Excellence**

### **Paul Kamin, Eastsound Water Users Association**

Four people nominated Paul Kamin, chair of the San Juan County Water Resources Committee, for his work as a water conservationist and advocate. He led efforts to update the Eastsound water system infrastructure and technology, providing for new growth and conserving water resources. He communicated clearly to customers during last summer's drought and led successful efforts to conserve water during peak demand times.

## **2015**

## **Commitment to Excellence**

### **Tacoma Water**

The Green River Filtration Facility is celebrating the opening of the new, 150 million gallons per day filtration treatment plant—the largest in our state. When water systems use surface water, such as rivers and lakes, particles in the water must be removed to meet drinking water standards. The \$197.5 million dollar project serves more than 600,000 customers in Pierce and King counties.

### **Kitsap Public Utility District**

Healthy water systems, long-time employees, and happy customers all describe the Kitsap Public Utility District (PUD). The PUD, which owns and operates around 150 water systems, is committed to helping struggling systems in Kitsap County. They are a valuable partner for the Department of Health in providing safe and reliable drinking water.

## **Pursuit of Excellence**

### **City of Colville Water System**

The city, recognizing the need to replace a deteriorating water system, formed a committee of city officials and local residents to create a long-term financial plan. The plan, adopted in 2010, included an unpopular rate increase of 4.5 percent for five years. During this time, the city replaced three wells, improved water reservoirs, repaired leaks (saving about two million gallons a year), and replaced old meters and several thousand feet of water mains.

## **Lifetime Achievement**

### **Steve Prather, Clark Public Utilities, Retired**

Prather, who retired, implemented Clark Public Utilities' state-of-the-art computer structure that enables high-level monitoring and control of a complex water system. His efforts helped operators respond to system concerns from remote facilities, which improved response times, minimized damage and water loss, and improved service to customers.



## Above and Beyond

### John Wesely, Cedar Water Treatment Facility

As plant and project manager at the Cedar Water Treatment Facility, Wesely and his eight-member staff oversee a 180 million gallons per day plant for Seattle Public Utilities. Wesely, a CH2M Hill employee, had double-duty as a manager and shift operator for several months. His nomination cited his ability to “keep the greater Seattle area water taps running full and clean.”

## Operator of the Year

### Cheryl Capron, Seattle Public Utilities

In her nomination, Capron was described as a “working example of ‘Operator of the Year’ every year!” Her accomplishments include a shutdown block analysis of the Seattle Public Utilities distribution system that identified fire-flow and low-pressure deficiencies.

## Going Above and Beyond

### Phil Gady and Melissa Young

When windstorms result in power outages, it can put water systems at risk. The systems in northern Spokane County were hard hit the summer of 2015. Gady and Young, both certified water system operators, quickly assessed damage, mitigated threats, and restored service to affected systems. They also became the ears and eyes for helping the agency prioritize response and recovery assistance efforts.

## 2014

## Grace Under Pressure

### Albert Darrow (Clearwood Community Association Board), Maintenance Manager, Thurston County

Albert Darrow, operator for the Clearwood Community Association water system near Yelm, experienced a situation that every operator dreads: bacterial contamination that led to a long-running boil-water advisory. The situation was frustrating because there was no obvious opening for contaminants to enter the water system. He worked closely with ODW staff to explore the entire water system and make improvements. He worked more than five weeks without a day off to restore water quality for the community's 2,800 residents.

### Kirk Lally and Randy Russell, Operator and Superintendent, Spokane County

Freeman School District Superintendent Randy Russell and water system operator Kirk Lally were chosen because of their response to elevated levels of carbon tetrachloride, a chemical found in pesticides and solvents, in the school district's well. Between March 2012 and September 2013, they identified water treatment alternatives, obtained and managed two short-deadline grants, and acquired and installed a treatment system. The new system ensured safe drinking water for the school district's 900 students and staff.

## Lifetime Achievement

### Bill Evans, Whatcom County, Retired

Bill was chief operator for the City of Bellingham's Water Filtration Plant for more than twenty-five years. He was a champion for maximizing the operation of the filtration plant, and initiated many



improvements designed to increase the plant's performance. The Bellingham Water Plant is one of only twelve in the nation to receive the fifteen-year Director's Award in the Partnership for Safe Water. He is a leader in drinking water professional associations as well.

## **Lifetime Achievement**

### **Dan Katsel, Walla Walla County, Retired**

Public Works Director Dan Katsel is being recognized for his thirty-nine years of service with the City of Waitsburg. He started working for the city as a laborer in 1975, and worked his way up. He has been involved in every aspect of the city's Public Works Department and oversees several unique features of the water system, most of which was designed in the 1930s. He has been involved in countless public works projects that relate to more than just the city's water system.

## **Ongoing Excellence**

### **Steve Coke, Cross-Connection Control Specialist, Thurston County**

Steve Coke was recognized for his ongoing efforts to improve the City of Olympia's cross-connection control program, which exists to prevent harmful biological, chemical, or physical contaminants from entering the drinking water supply. Under his leadership, the city identified seventy-five unprotected high or severe hazard connections, primarily medical facilities. His achievements include bringing Olympia from a 67 percent compliance rate for annual backflow prevention equipment testing to a 95 percent compliance rate in three years.

## **2013**

## **Going Above and Beyond**

### **Dave Olson, President of Water Systems Services Inc./Cornerstone Management and certified operator, Whatcom County**

Dave Olson, a management consultant and certified operator, was honored for his efforts to address nitrate contamination in Whatcom County. He initially volunteered his expertise to help oDW find alternative sources of water for four threatened water systems that together serve more than 700 people. In the process, he developed a deep understanding of the issues facing each system. Olson has conducted numerous studies on alternative water sources.

## **Most Improved**

### **Belfair Water District #1 (Thomas Peadon), Mason County**

This award recognizes Belfair Water District #1's transformation from a water system in chaos into a well-managed operation. Thomas Peadon, the system's new manager and operator, is largely credited for the system's recent success. The North Mason County water system faced failing equipment, a crisis of leadership, and financial and legal woes. The award credits Peadon and the utility district's board of commissioners with confronting those challenges and restoring public confidence in the water system.

## **Operator of the Year**

### **Gary Sale, State Parks & Contract Operator, San Juan County**

Gary received his award for excellent management of multiple water systems in the San Juan Islands. He managed state park water systems in San Juan County, provided support for five additional systems in the islands, and is a contract operator for more water systems. As a Washington State Parks employee,



he's kept water systems safe and reliable despite budget and staff cuts. He initiated strategies that help others do their jobs better; such as written standard operating procedures for seven state park water systems that help park staff operate the systems safely and consistently.

## 2012

Award program on hold, due to budget reductions.

## 2011

### Most Improved

#### Town of Endicott, Whitman County

David Jepsen nominated Town of Endicott for its completion of major rehabilitation improvements to its potable water system. A new well ensures safe, reliable drinking water for customers. They increased fire storage and fire flow capacity. Reduced leakage from 13.2 percent to 6 percent.

### Grace Under Pressure

#### Mason County Public Utility District #1

In October 2010, E. coli contamination was detected in the wells of Canal Mutual Water System and the Minerva Terrace Water System. The contamination was from heavy rainfall—200 percent higher than normal. Staff sprang into action, alerting customers with hand-delivered notices, handing out bottled water, working with state and county health departments and consultants. Staff endured long hours, showing dedication and hard work to resolve the contamination.

### Going Above and Beyond

#### City of Walla Walla

The City's Public Works Department has a vision to leave a legacy of sustainable infrastructure for the future. The City put a plan together, the Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Plan, for water and sewer system replacement. The City produced informational documents, promoted the plan, and held public meetings, ensuring citizens were aware of the magnitude of the problems. 2010 was the first year of construction under the plan.

### Operator of the Year

#### Kim Gubbe, Thurston County Public Utility District #1

The nomination for Kim Gubbe says it all: "Kim is committed to ensuring that all of the PUD's customers have safe and reliable drinking water and selflessly gives of her own time and resources to support this goal." Gubbe, certified operator for twenty-five Group A water systems, 130 Group B water systems, and serves as the certified operator for fourteen managed water systems. "She is proactive in relying on prevention as the first line of defense to avoid potentially health-threatening and costly problems," the nomination said.

### Lifetime Achievement

#### Kathleen "Cas" Hancock, Concrete, Retired

Cas Hancock, certified operator, was honored for her many contributions to the drinking water industry. The nomination said Hancock is an asset to the water systems that she manages, as well as to ODW.



"She's our partner in public health as it relates to the physical operations of the water systems and the need for sound management and financial health. She is out in the field carrying these important messages."

## Friend of Drinking Water

### Lewis County

Lewis County helped struggling water systems through technical and managerial problems, floods-2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Lewis County conducted weeks of emergency response, coordinating and delivering water to customers, schools, community centers. The county has displayed extraordinary leadership throughout the years and commitment to providing safe and reliable drinking water.

## 2010

## Most Improved

### Sunrise Beach Association, San Juan Island County

Sunrise Beach water system on Lopez Island struggled with frequent water outages, bacterial contamination, arsenic levels that exceeded safe drinking water standards, and a continuous boil-water advisory. The board completely rebuilt the small water system. Its customers now have consistent access to safe, reliable drinking water.

## Grace Under Pressure

### City of Kennewick, Municipal Services Department Water Treatment Plant

The City of Kennewick faced a perfect storm. The Kennewick Irrigation District had a canal leak that left the city without irrigation water service for two weeks. Temperatures were above 100 degrees. The city also had electrical problems with pumps at its water treatment plant and water storage levels were declining. Chief operator Paul Briggs and the plant staff kept the pumps working, despite some failures and got the city through the crisis.

## Going Above and Beyond

### Paula Brock, Pine Terrace Water Association, Oak Harbor

Paula Brock, president of the Pine Terrace Water Association on Whidbey Island, navigated several setbacks, yet refused to give up her quest to upgrade the community's undersized, inadequate water system. The upgrades are now complete.

## Operator of the Year

### Carl McCrary, City of Kalama

Carl's nomination says it all: "One person's attitude can make a big difference in the success of the utility." McCrary, the City of Kalama's public works director, faced challenges including flooding, maintenance issues, and a significant water outage. "Carl responds very quickly to any emergency, always praises his staff and ...considers himself a true partner with us in the business of providing safe drinking water for his town," the nomination said.

## Lifetime Achievement

### Monte Brachmann, City of Camas, Retired

Monte, recently retired public works director for the City of Camas, received the Lifetime Achievement



Award for his many contributions to the drinking water industry. Brachmann helped found the Lower Columbia Subsection of the American Water Works Association. He led and served on the Washington Waterworks Operator Certification Advisory Committee and state advisory boards.

## **Friend of Drinking Water**

### **Drew Noble, H2O Management Company, Mason County**

Noble, who served on the Department of Health's Water Supply Advisory Committee, helped struggling water systems through technical and managerial problems. ODW workers said he has "a passion for providing safe and reliable drinking water...and tries to do so at a reasonable price."

## **2009**

## **Grace Under Pressure**

### **Drug Abuse Prevention Center, Cowlitz County**

The Drug Abuse Prevention Center's well and reservoir were intentionally contaminated by an unknown intruder on Memorial Day weekend last year. The Center immediately brought in bottled water and portable toilets and showers, then set about correcting the problem. Its staff worked with the Cowlitz County Health Department and Sheriff's Office, ODW, and other state offices to protect the health of clients and staff—all while maintaining the integrity of a criminal investigation.

## **Going Above and Beyond**

### **Port of Walla Walla, Burbank Business Park Water System**

The Port of Walla Walla was recognized for developing the Burbank Business Park Water System. The Port embarked on a \$3.5 million project to build a central water system for the business park and its neighbors, which eliminated individual wells. The Port now supplies water to the Columbia School District, which allowed the district to stop using nitrate-contaminated wells. The Port also plans to provide a better water source for the 100 residential customers of the Columbia View Water System in Burbank.

## **Operator of the Year**

### **Cary Eller, Chelan County**

Cary, water quality program coordinator for the Chelan County Public Utility District, is 2009's "Operator of the Year." Eller managed twelve water systems in Chelan, Douglas, and Grant counties. He took on systems with no operators and those with challenging problems such as arsenic. Eller earned praise for being conscientious and effective, and focusing on preventing rather than reacting to problems.

## **Friend of Drinking Water**

### **Brad Lake and Sean Bauer, City of Kent**

Brad Lake and Sean Bauer showed exceptional commitment to providing safe and reliable drinking water to customers in Kent and neighboring water systems. As water superintendent, Lake made sure Kent's water system operators offered their services to neighboring systems. He devoted his own time to help resolve their water issues and to develop regional planning groups. Bauer, Kent's water quality supervisor, has also found ways to improve neighboring systems. He is on a state advisory committee for operator certification.



## 2008

### Grace Under Pressure

#### Spanaway Water Co. Manager Jeff Johnson and staff

E. coli bacteria was detected in some routine water samples. Johnson and the Spanaway Water Co. staff worked with ODW staff to issue news releases in time for the evening news, alerting 20,000 people served by the water system that there might be a problem. They worked with state and local agencies to notify schools and food service establishments, set up a station for customers to get drinking water, and staffed an after-hours call center.

### Going Above and Beyond

#### Sharon Germano, Forest Glen Estates Homeowners Association, Pierce County

Sharon led the Forest Glen Estates homeowners association's efforts to overhaul its failing water system. The Forest Glen resident, who had no experience running water systems, volunteered to obtain grants and loans to finance construction, oversaw system improvements, and guided the community through water outages and health advisories. Today, the Pierce County development has an improved water system that can handle peak demands.

### Operator of the Year

#### Kathy Small, Pasadena Park Irrigation District No. 17 in the Spokane Valley

Small not only led efforts to rehabilitate a water system with one of the state's highest leakage rates, she documented the steps she took and calculated savings in pumping costs as well as water conserved for future growth. Small then created a training course to help other systems tackle leakage issues. She's also recognized for a team-building management style that inspired others to give their best and for service through professional and educational organizations.

### Lifetime Achievement

#### Edward Bush, City of Washougal, Retired

Edward Bush, retired water system manager for the City of Washougal in Clark County, received the "Lifetime Achievement Award." During his 30-year career, he spearheaded water system initiatives and improvements, provided leadership in professional associations, and worked to improve service, education, accountability, and professionalism.

### Friend of Drinking Water

#### Lorna Parent, Skagit County Health Department

For more than 20 years, Lorna helped towns such as Rockport, Big Lake, and Marblemount obtain safe, reliable drinking water. Her efforts to access drinking water data for local health departments contributed to development of the state Department of Health's drinking water Internet database.

## 2007

### Most Improved

#### Town of Eatonville

To meet its rapid population growth and water quality problems, Eatonville built a new reservoir, rebuilt



its telemetry system, and constructed a new state-of-the-art water-treatment plant.

## Grace Under Pressure

### Washington Water Service Company

When a windstorm blew the power out in Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, King, Mason, Pierce, and Thurston counties last December, Washington Water Service employees made sure the 20,000 residents of their 197 water systems didn't lose drinking water. The company's emergency response plan and communications system let customers know when they would have water restored and ensured all customers had water at least part of each day. At one point, they were refueling and rotating portable generators among 135 water systems.

## Going Above and Beyond

### Judy Davis, Homeowner, Paxson Platt Water System, Grant County

Davis, a homeowner on the Paxson Platt Water System, played a major role in bringing the failing water system back into compliance with state regulations. Davis was instrumental in rallying the community to petition the City of Moses Lake for direct water service.

## Lifetime Achievement

### Norm Kramm, City of Vancouver, Retired

Kramm is an outstanding leader in the water industry with thirty years of public service. In the twenty-four years since he became Vancouver's superintendent of water production and quality in 1983, the size of the utility has doubled, population has quadrupled, and public works staff have tripled.

## Friend of Drinking Water

### Jacqueline "JJ" Bellinger, Okanogan County Public Health District

Bellinger, an environmental health specialist for the county, often worked weekends and holidays helping water systems resolve contamination issues or quickly get lab results. Bellinger managed the county drinking water program, inspected water systems and wells for water quality problems, provided technical advice, and ran the local health department's drinking water lab.

## 2006

## Most Improved

### Skamania Public Utility District

The PUD was recognized for enacting aggressive conservation measures to reduce water use, saving about 18 million gallons of water per year. In addition to its conservation efforts, it helped make improvements to the Carson Water System. The PUD also worked to build a 2.3 mile transmission line connecting Carson Water System to the Carson Industrial Water System, make improvements to the treatment plant, and continue watershed planning.

## Grace Under Pressure

### Sharon Kimball and Consolidated Irrigation District #19 in Spokane County

Last fall, Bob Ashcraft, manager of Consolidated Irrigation District #19, received news that one of



his water samples came back positive for E. coli. Whenever this happens, a water system must take additional samples, send them to the lab, and wait for the results to learn whether or not there is a public health problem. Ashcraft had to travel out of state the next morning - before results were due. Anticipating the worst, he made arrangements for his staff to handle the crisis in his absence.

## Going Above and Beyond

### Longview Water Treatment Plant

Recognized for its role in ODW's training program. In addition to learning how to operate its own plant at the highest possible level, the Longview plant hosted several training sessions and provided equipment to operators from other plants.

## Operator of the Year and Lifetime Achievement

### Frank Piper, City of Puyallup, Retired

Frank was recognized for his work for the city water division. A city employee since 1969, Piper was a member of the water division since 1980, and the lead worker for 20 years. He faced broken water mains that flooded seven city blocks, helped firefighters get an adequate water supply to fight one of the city's largest fires, and manually operated the water system during power outages to ensure the city's reservoirs remained full. Piper was also recognized for helping low-income and elderly customers repair water leaks—on his own time, without compensation.

## Friend of Drinking Water

### David Eaton, Walla Walla County Health Department

David, Environmental Health Director for Walla Walla County Health, was recognized for his efforts in providing healthy drinking water to his community.

## 2005

## Most Improved

### Sentinel Gap Water Association in Grant County

The Association was recognized as the “most improved” water system. Last year this small community replaced its old, disintegrating water system with new facilities, including all distribution mains, the pump and control system, and a state-of-the-art reconstructed well head. The project took years of work and funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Program, the state's Community Development Block Grant Program, consultants, water system operators, and the Grant County Health District.

## Going Above and Beyond

### Snohomish Public Utility District

The PUD received an award for “going above and beyond” to operate a quality water system. In addition to directly operating and managing fifteen water utilities in Snohomish County, the PUD was recognized for its outstanding support of neighboring systems during emergencies.

## Operator Recognition

### Ray Klube, Willapa Valley Water District

For the first time, an individual certified water system operator was recognized during Drinking Water



Week. Ray was honored for his exemplary commitment to protecting the public. He operated and/or managed the district's water system for thirty-five years. Ray started with the district under a high school work program. After graduating in 1973, he became a full-time employee and a state-certified operator. Recently Ray led the replacement of a more than thirty-year-old pressure filtration system with a modern direct-filter system.

## Handling a Crisis Well

### South Whidbey School District

This Whidbey Island water system provides drinking water to 1,700 students and staff. The school district was recognized for taking an active role in educating students, teachers, and the community about lead last fall after finding it in their drinking water. The district held a public education forum to discuss the issue. Information was presented by school board members, school staff, local public health, and the Department of Health. Within a week, every school in the district was provided with bottled water.

## 2004

### City of Hamilton in Skagit County

Serving a rural community of 350, the city created a new, protected source of water outside the Skagit River flood plain. The city's old well was highly susceptible to flooding and was subject to contamination from the river.

### Stevens County Public Utility District

The PUD facilitated the consolidation and rehabilitation of several small struggling water systems. It has a long history of providing safe and reliable drinking water by assisting failing small water systems in Spokane and Stevens counties with technical assistance and operations or management assistance.

### City of Shelton

The city discovered fecal coliform bacteria in drinking water and did an exceptional job notifying 8,400 customers to boil their water. The city immediately began chlorination and an aggressive reservoir cleaning and distribution-flushing program to locate the source of the contamination. They also developed a regional water supply and wastewater management plan that facilitated long-term industrial and economic growth, met environmental and health regulations, and allowed for the restructure of many small inadequate water supplies in the area.

## 2003

### Foothills Water Association in eastern King County

Serving the communities of Kangley and Selleck in eastern King County, the association recently completed construction of a new drinking water system. Kangley residents were getting their water from a creek and Selleck's water was transported through a pipeline made up of various materials including wood staves. Both communities were expected to either boil their drinking water or purchase bottled water.

In addition to the construction of two wells to replace the unfiltered surface water supplies, the Foothills Water Association provides disinfection treatment, water storage and pumping facilities, standby power, service meters, a significant amount of new water lines, and improved water pressure. The water system is designed to serve 85 homes and the new investments cost about \$1.5 million.



## City of Aberdeen

For many years the city supplied unfiltered water to their customers. When there were heavy rains, the water became murky and people had to boil their drinking water. “Boil water” advisories were common; in fact there was one advisory that lasted over a year. There was also a problem with leakage from the reservoirs.

By developing partnerships the City of Aberdeen was able to turn around its situation and install a 6.5 million gallon per day water filtration plant. In addition to filtering the water, the pH is adjusted to control lead and copper levels, and fluoride is added. Improvements were made to the city's two reservoirs, which greatly improved water quality by eliminating stagnant water.

In addition to the improvements made to the reservoirs and water treatment, loans to the city from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund were used to install 6,100 service meters. With the use of the meters, city workers are able to identify and repair leaks much easier. Water usage for the city has gone from an average of 4.2 million gallons per day in 2002 to an anticipated 3.4 million gallons per day this year.

## Kershaw Fruit Company

A privately owned water system, Kershaw's direct customers were their 40 employees. Their water quality was also important because it's used to process the apples Kershaw provides to local grocers. DOH identified several key areas for improvement, including monitoring for nitrates, chemicals, and other water quality conditions. Through updated and increased monitoring, the company was better able to define and take actions to improve their water quality, making it safe for their community.

