

rural developments



Visit the new RCAP national website

The RCAP national office has launched its newly redesigned website at www.rcap.org and re-established its web presence.

The website went live in late 2009 and provides a new, expanded and modern space for the RCAP national office and regional partners to share information and raise their profiles.

The site features a news blog, which is one of the sections that will be updated most frequently with items of interest from the national office and the water and wastewater world. Visitors can receive blog posts (and other new information) via RSS feeds. Other frequently updated sections will include featured communities and a national calendar of training events.

One of the most useful sections to communities is the area for RCAP's publications and resources. Among RCAP's major resources that are provided in this section is the Security and Emergency Response Planning Toolbox for Small Water and Wastewater Systems, which is available there in its entirety. This section also includes links to many helpful resources produced by other organizations and agencies.

These and other features are being added to the site, which will become more fully operational in the coming months. Another

section that will be added soon is a private area for RCAP staff that will include a bulletin board for staff-only notifications and discussions.

"RCAP's new website is a key way for us to tell the organization's story and become more visible," said RCAP Executive Director Robert Stewart. "We hope the various groups we touch – communities we are working with and may work with in the future, staff, agencies, elected officials – will find the site useful. We also welcome their feedback and input on the site."



Changes to Rural Matters

With this issue, the first of 2010, *Rural Matters* will be published six times per year. By sending you an issue every other month, we will increase the frequency of communicating with the various audiences that the magazine reaches and the sharing of information among them. We hope this strengthens the learning and connections that take place in the RCAP network. As always, we welcome your feedback and participation in the magazine. Send your comments, ideas for articles and submissions to the *Rural Matters* editor, Stephen Padre, at spadre@rcap.org

New website about drinking water issues available to small communities

A new website featuring free articles and educational resources to increase aware-

ness about crucial water and wastewater issues is now available.

The site, located at www.nesc.wvu.edu/waterwedrink, is part of "The Water We Drink: Small Community Outreach Campaign," which offers information about maintaining safe, sustainable, and secure water supplies in small and rural communities.



The campaign is a joint effort of RCAP and the National Environmental Services Center (NESC), located at West Virginia University, and is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

RCAP's Director of Training and Technical Services Joy Barrett, Ph.D., says, "The materials present practical, doable steps that local leaders and small water utility board members can take to address day-to-day challenges, such as aging infrastructure, workforce shortages and water pollution, that can threaten local water sources and services. Our main message is that local leadership is essential in protecting and maintaining these critical services, and there are many options for taking action."

Sandra Fallon, NESC training specialist, adds, "The website's articles encourage local leaders to be proactive and work with their water systems to address infrastructure problems and labor shortages by, for example, implementing an asset management program or partnering with local high schools and colleges to introduce students to water industry careers. The educational resources address keeping pharmaceuti-

icals and personal care products out of our waterways by educating residents about proper disposal methods and starting a community-wide prescription drug collection and disposal program.”

The website offers newsletter articles, brochures, a PowerPoint presentation and fact sheets that are available free to download for educational and nonprofit uses, such as reprinting in newsletters or magazines, distributing via e-mail or Internet, or using for training or public presentations. Additional resources will be added throughout the coming year.

For more information about the campaign or website, contact Sandra Fallon at 800/624-8301, ext. 5582, or at sfallon@mail.wvu.edu

Housed at WVU’s National Research Center for Coal and Energy, NESC is a federally funded program that helps small and rural communities with their water, wastewater, management, and infrastructure resilience challenges. To learn more about NESC, call 800/624-8301 or visit www.nesc.wvu.edu



Fact sheets on WARN available

Two new fact sheets on WARN – Water/Wastewater Agency Response Networks – are available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The fact sheets are for small water systems and tribal water systems. They provide background on WARN and describe their benefits to these two types of systems.



Several of RCAP’s Safety and Security projects, funded by the Office of Community Services of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, have increasing WARN membership as a key activity. The fact sheets are an ideal resource for accomplishing this goal by assisting with WARN outreach efforts.

The mission of WARN is to provide water systems with expedited access to specialized resources that are needed to respond to and recover from natural and human-caused events that disrupt public and private drinking water and wastewater utilities.

Small Water Systems: A Vital Component of WARN: www.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/pubs/fs_watersecurity_warn_small_systems.pdf

Tribal Water Systems: A Vital Component of WARN: www.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/pubs/fs_watersecurity_warn_tribal_systems.pdf

New website for helping water and wastewater facilities be better energy users

A new Environmental Protection Agency website for energy efficiency and renewable energy at water and wastewater facilities has been launched as part of the agency’s efforts to promote sustainable infrastructure.

According to the site, drinking water and wastewater systems account for approximately 3 to 4 percent of energy use in the

United States. These utilities are typically the largest energy consumers of municipal governments, accounting for 30 to 40 percent of total energy consumed. Energy as a percentage of operating costs for drinking water systems can also reach as high as 40 percent.

The site includes energy auditing tools, energy efficiency best practices, alternative energy information, funding sources, training resources, and more.

Visit the site at www.epa.gov/waterinfrastructure/energyefficiency.htm



EPA releases final specification for WaterSense new homes to help homeowners increase water efficiency and save on utility bills

WASHINGTON (EPA)—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released its final WaterSense single-family new homes specification today, creating the first national, voluntary, water-efficiency specification for an entire new home.

“Home builders can now partner with EPA and earn the WaterSense label for their newly built homes, helping to create livable communities and quality homes that are easy to maintain,” said Peter S. Silva, assistant administrator for EPA’s Office of Water. “These homes will save homeowners as much as \$200 a year on utility bills compared to their current homes.”

continued on next page

continued from previous page

EPA worked with hundreds of stakeholders over the past three years to develop this specification, which was designed to complement existing green building programs. WaterSense-labeled new homes, which will be 20 percent more efficient than typical new homes, must be independently inspected and certified by an EPA-licensed certification provider to meet the WaterSense criteria for water efficiency and performance.

The new homes will feature WaterSense-labeled plumbing fixtures, Energy Star-qualified appliances (if installed), water-efficient landscaping, and hot-water delivery systems that deliver hot water faster, so homeowners don't waste water—or energy—waiting at the tap.

By investing in WaterSense-labeled homes, American home buyers can reduce their water usage by more than 10,000 gallons per year—enough to fill a backyard swimming pool—and save enough energy annually to power a television for four years.

If the approximately 1.27 million new homes built in the United States each year were WaterSense-labeled, more than 12 billion gallons of water would be saved.

With this announcement, EPA is inviting home builders to join the WaterSense program and commit to building water-efficient new homes.

WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by EPA, seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by offering people simple ways to use less water.

More information on WaterSense-labeled new homes: www.epa.gov/watersense/spaces/new_homes.html

To see a video message about the WaterSense new homes specification: www.epa.gov/multimedia/playercontents/video/watersense/index.html



EPA on Facebook

EPA's Office of Water launched its "Water Is Worth It" page on Facebook in December 2009. The page on the popular social networking site on the web is designed to provide a public forum to share information, encourage discussion, and raise awareness about the value of water and water-related resources.

EPA will be posting information and discussion topics regularly, which Facebook users can have delivered to their virtual door by becoming a "fan" of the page. The EPA encourages visitors to post and interact with the discussion and learning about our nation's water and water infrastructure.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Washington-DC/EPA-Water-Is-Worth-It/175423483336?ref=mf>
(or search for "Water Is Worth It")



WaterISAC

Water Security Network

EPA offers security and emergency management resources to utilities

Information on infrastructure protection and recovery from all hazards is vital to utilities. To assist utilities with access to this information, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and WaterISAC are offering 12 months of free access to WaterISAC's Pro service. The service is a clearinghouse of security and emergency-management resources. This offer is open to water and

wastewater utilities of all sizes, as well as water associations, state environment and homeland security agencies, and circuit riders.

WaterISAC was established in 2002 as a nonprofit water-sector organization in support of infrastructure protection.

"The WaterISAC team has worked diligently to expand the online portal's products in an effort to boost its relevancy to rural communities," said RCAP's Executive Director Robert Stewart. "By joining the WaterISAC community, RCAP members will enhance their security prowess and have the opportunity to provide input on future WaterISAC products."

Subscribers include utility personnel from general managers to circuit riders and everything in between. State and federal government agencies with responsibilities for water, homeland security and emergency management are also enrolled.

WaterISAC Pro's secure online library contains more than 2,000 white papers, best practices, vulnerability assessment tools, and research reports from the Water Research Foundation and the Water Environment Research Foundation. These resources help utilities prepare for all hazards and develop response and recovery plans. WaterISAC Pro also hosts free webinars on current topics such as lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, insider threats, and the H1N1 pandemic. Upcoming webinar topics include current terrorism threats and the use of social media to communicate with consumers.

"WaterISAC is a rich source of information that my staff uses to support our mission to help protect water infrastructure," said Phil Bastin of BBP Water Corporation in Indiana. "The WaterISAC team is attuned to the needs of rural communities."

To sign up for 12 months of free access to WaterISAC Pro, visit www.waterisac.org ■