

Water, Water Everywhere

DEQ WQD PWS Quarterly Newsletter

APRIL 2024

Welcome to the quarterly newsletter for the Public Water Supply (PWS) Water Quality Division (WQD). This newsletter will keep you up to date on the latest in the world of water and will also help you ensure your systems are running smoothly by providing information and links to upcoming trainings, events, and funding opportunities. So dive in! The water's fine.

THE DEADLINE APPROACHES



[Oklahoma DEQ LSLI Training and Tools](#)

[Oklahoma DEQ DWSRF Website](#)

[Oklahoma Rural Infrastructure Grant \(RIG\)](#)

[Oklahoma DEQ Fact Sheet: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\) Funds](#)

[EPA Fact Sheet: Developing and Maintaining a Service Line Inventory](#)

[EPA Fact Sheet: Proposed Lead and Copper Rule Improvements FAQ](#)



A HEALTHY CHECKBOOK MEANS HEALTHY WATER

Upcoming Training & Events



Lead Service Line Inventory Trainings

April 11th, 2024 | Broken Arrow

April 25th, 2024 | Durant

May 9th, 2024 | Stillwater

May 23rd, 2024 | Tahlequah

Be prepared for compliance by October 16, 2024. For more dates and to register click [here](#).



Operator Renewal Training

April 9th, 2024 | McAlester

April 16th, 2024 | Woodward

April 23rd, 2024 | Shawnee

April 30th, 2024 | Goodwell

May 2nd, 2024 | Afton

May 14th, 2024 | Blackwell

Oklahoma DEQ is hosting a number of Operator Renewal Trainings throughout the state (availability may be limited).

Learn more and register [here](#).

While we'd all like to think water is a free resource, the truth is a lot of money goes into treating, pumping, and distributing water to every section of our communities. To maintain healthy drinking water, all water systems need to be planning and maintaining healthy finances. Not only to ensure the water for today is ready for public use, but to plan for future demands as well. Use the resources below to begin your financial planning and ensure the funds you do have are being allocated correctly and wisely.

[The Small Office Guide to Segregation of Duties: Receipting](#)

[EPA: Utilities Finance Planning Workshop](#)

[EPA: Setting Small Drinking Water System Rates for Sustainable Future](#)

[EPA: Water Infrastructure Financial Leadership](#)

[ORWA: Long Range Sustainability Program](#)



**THE FIRST STEP
TO ANY RESPONSE
IS PREPARATION**

We all know how important it is to be prepared for any situation, especially in Oklahoma where we deal with every type of natural disaster such as tornadoes, wildfires, floods, ice storms, and even earthquakes. It is also a requirement of America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) for any system serving more than 3,300 people to update Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRA) and Emergency Response Plans (ERP) every five years, and the next cycle for updates is here. Whether you are updating a plan or creating one for the first time, follow the links below so that your system can quickly recover from anything mother nature can throw at it.

[EPA: Incident Action Checklists for Water Utilities](#)

[EPA: Water Utility Response On-The-Go Plus Mobile App](#)

[SoonerWarn Website](#)

[EPA: Community Water System Emergency Response Plan Template & Instructions](#)

[Get Ready for Round 2 of AWIA Section 2013 RRA and ERP Requirements](#)

[AWWA's Utility Risk & Resilience Certificate Program](#)

[AWWA: Risk & Resilience Tools & Resources](#)



Roadshow Training

April 25th, 2024 | Tenkiller

May 16th, 2024 | Quartz Mt

To register for the Roadshow and for other trainings such as Water Operator Certification and Board Member Training, discover more [here](#).



OKLAHOMA
Water Resources Board

News & Events

Various Dates & Locations

A primary source for news and upcoming events. Click [here](#).

Contact:

**DEQ Public Water Supply
405-702-8100**

Funding & Assistance Corner

There are a number of funding resources available. Follow these links for more information and reach out to us with any questions.

[Oklahoma Water Resources Board \(OWRB\)](#)

[Drinking Water State Revolving Fund \(DWSRF\)](#)

[Rural Infrastructure Grant \(RIG\)](#)

[Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program](#)

[ORWA Technical Assistance](#)

[Funding and Technical Resources for LSLR in Small and Disadvantaged Communities \(EPA\)](#)

[CISA Cybersecurity Grant Program](#)

SYSTEM SPOTLIGHT

Spotlighting systems and individuals that have shown excellence in meeting the needs of Oklahoma communities by keeping water systems healthy.

Shawn Sewell has been working with Oklahoma Rural Water Association (ORWA) since 2022. Using his previous experience as a small-town water operator, he now provides technical assistance to small water systems throughout the state. His knowledge, hard work, and dedication help public water systems optimize their operations. One recent example is his work with Loyal public water supply.

Describe your most recent project:

The town of Loyal is a very small groundwater water system in western Oklahoma. As a result of nitrate violations, Loyal received a principal forgiveness loan from DEQ's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to build a new nitrate removal ion exchange plant, which was recently completed. Loyal's main water operators, Floyd and Dorothy Glazier, did not have experience operating an ion exchange plant. Shawn stepped in to provide hands on assistance, training, information, and other tools necessary for them to successfully operate the new plant. Shawn helped the Glaziers optimize their plant by creating a standard operating procedure outlining water plant flows, based on incoming nitrate levels. This helps reduce future costs by ensuring that the plant is meeting nitrate requirements, but not running above the needed capacity as nitrate levels change.

What are the most pressing challenges you have seen water systems facing?

Communities not recognizing the importance of their own water systems and operators, which comes with low pay and difficulties retaining staff. These dedicated operators miss holidays and family time to keep water safe and flowing to their communities 24/7. While other services in the community are provided funding and resources, water systems are often overlooked, even though other services rely on water to keep their operations running. People take water coming from the faucet for granted and only understand its value when the water goes out. The general public does not recognize that many operators are trying to keep an antique plant running on their own with little pay, no support, and low funding.

What advice do you have for small Oklahoma water systems?

Reach out and take time to find what funding and other opportunities are available. Communicate with other water systems to see what works for them. Create those networks and mutual connections. You can get more than one opinion and learn from another system about positive and negative aspects of a particular project. Do research ahead of time and work with state, local, and federal authorities. Try to involve the public and provide them with the truth about the issues you are facing at your water system.



Shawn with water operator Dorothy Glazier in front of the new nitrate removal ion exchange plant in Loyal, OK

What is your favorite aspect about working in water?

Being able to take the information and experience I have and share it with operators and other staff to help everyone produce quality drinking water. I like being a steward to bring one of our most valuable resources to communities, by providing operators information and technical assistance at no cost and ending each

Anything else you would like to add?

I would like to say thank you to my supervisors and managers for their support and giving me the trust and freedom to do what I do each day. I am here because of their support. I would especially like to thank Doug Hall, Carly Cordell, Jimmy Seago, and Brandon Bowman. I would do the job for free, but they make it possible to pay the bills while doing a good job at something I love.



Shawn assisting water operator Dorothy Glazier with standard operating procedures in Loyal, OK

Answers from last issue's crossword

Across

2. The largest-capacity lake in Oklahoma, it provides flood control, water supply, power, and recreation. (**eufaula**)

4. Due to often high winds, this lake is a perfect spot to practice sailing, kite surfing, and wind surfing. (**hefner**)

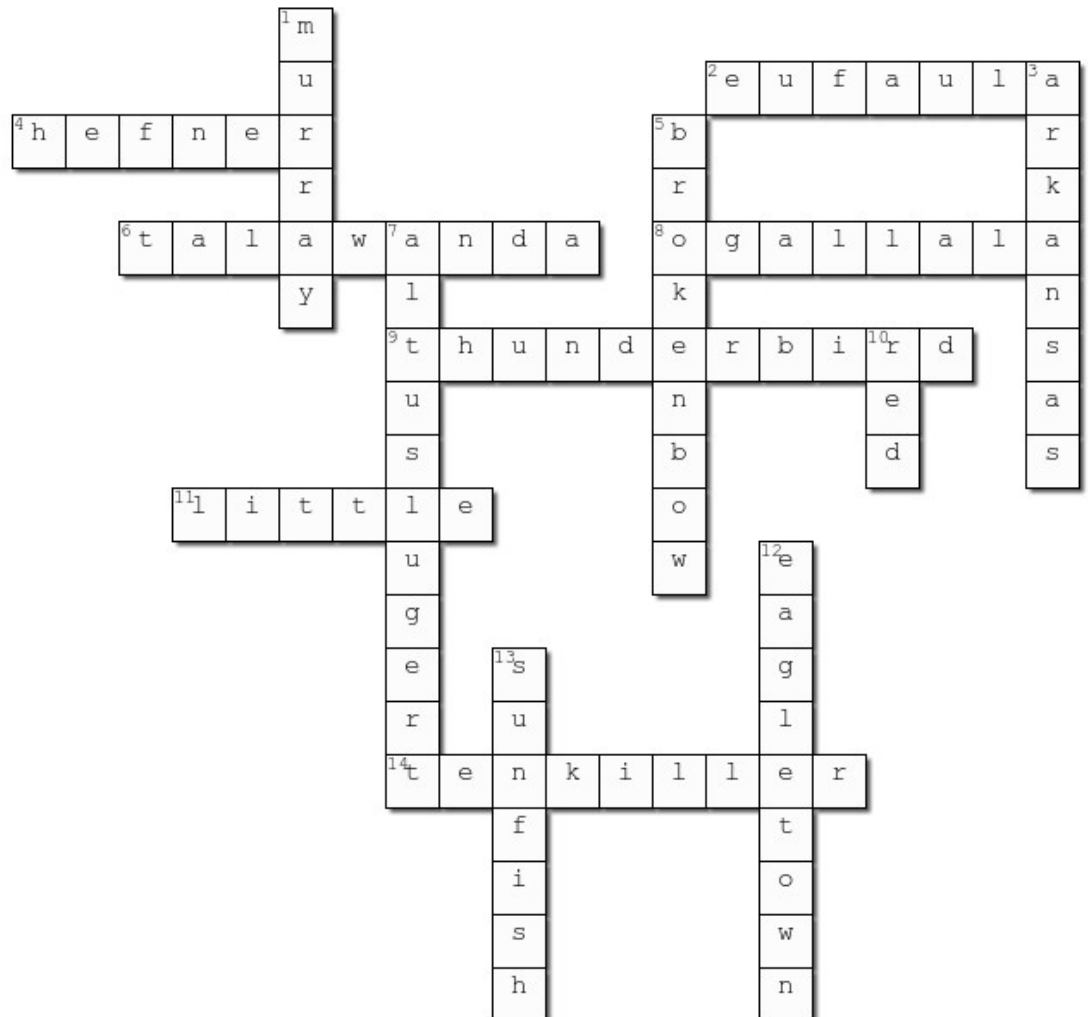
6. The oldest man made lake in Oklahoma, it has one of the highest clarity ratings of any lake in the state. (**talawanda**)

8. The largest aquifer in the United States, 95 percent of its water is used for irrigation. (**ogallala**)

9. This centrally located lake is named after a supernatural bird of power and strength from Native American legend. (**thunderbird**)

11. This river is situated in the lowest elevation point in Oklahoma. (**little**)

14. This Oklahoma lake is such a popular dive spot they created an underwater dive park for visitors. (**tenkiller**)



Down

1. A top outdoor destination, this lake is the main feature of Oklahoma's oldest and largest state park. (**murray**)

3. This river is the longest stretch of river in Oklahoma. It is also the 6th longest in the U.S. and 45th longest in the world. (**arkansas**)

5. The largest dam in Oklahoma, standing at 225 feet high with a total length of 4,026 feet. (**brokenbow**)

7. This lake was created over the remains of a town abandoned in 1912 after being hit by one too many tornados. (**altuslugert**)

10. Named for the color it turns from surrounding soils during flood periods, this river has been used for trade for centuries. (**red**)

12. The rainiest place in Oklahoma, this town receives about 53 inches of rain a year. (**eagletown**)

13. The most common fish in Oklahoma, they can be found in almost every Oklahoma lake. (**sunfish**)