

**STATE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR
APPRENTICESHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Walworth County Sewerage District
975 W Walworth Avenue
Delavan, WI

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present	Employer/Organization
Dierker, Marty	M&M Environmental and Educational Services
Freber, Kevin	City of Watertown Wastewater Treatment Plant
Wilson, Paul	Walworth County Sewage District
Zimmer, Kelly	MSA Professional Services

Members Absent	Employer/Organization
Bartel, Bruce	Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District

Consultant & Guests	Employer/Organization
Cook, Jim	Madison Area Technical College
Horvath, Stephen	Moraine Park Technical College
Martin, Sandy	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards -
Rice, Fred	Moraine Park Technical College
Saltes, Jack	WI Department of Natural Resources
Schmidt, Mark	Moraine Park Technical College
Schuck, Mike	Gateway Technical College
Smith, Owen	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards - Madison
Triscari, Nick	Milwaukee Area Technical College

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1. The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by Chair Marty Dierker in conformance with the Wisconsin open meeting laws.
 2. A roll call was conducted and a sign-in sheet was circulated.
 3. The minutes of the March 19, 2014, meeting were approved with the following revisions: the date and location are incorrect.

4. Old Business

a. **Review roster**

Owen Smith distributed the current roster, and asked members to confirm their contact information. Marty Dierker provided information for his new employer.

Owen Smith reported that Sharon Thieszen resigned from the committee due to a busy work schedule. Committee membership must represent as many areas of the state and types of sponsors as possible, provided they are qualified to sponsor an apprentice. Therefore, the Owen asked members to nominate a potential new member from an area of the state and plant not already represented.

Members and consultants suggested contact plants in the northwestern area of the state.

***Action:** The Bureau will revise the roster. Kevin Freber will email WWOA membership for volunteer candidates.*

b. **Follow-up items from previous meeting**

The Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator apprenticeship cannot participate in the Helmets to Hardhats program because the program is limited to construction trades only.

The Bureau received a complementary booth from the Wisconsin Wastewater Operators Association in October. The follow-up discussion is included as item 4.e.

The proposal to eliminate the minimum requirement of sponsors to process at least 1 MGD is included on the agenda as item 5b.

Owen Smith, Jack Saltes and Kevin Freber brainstormed ideas for an outreach brochure for municipalities in September. Their recommendations will be discussed during item 4.e.

Owen Smith has not forwarded the links the committee proposed posting on the Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit. He will propose alternative links during item 4.e.

c. **Model of successful pre-apprenticeship programs: Veterans in Piping**

This item was included on the tentative agenda but later omitted by BAS because the program model is unique to the construction sector.

d. **Apprenticeship Completion Award Program**

Owen informed attendees that ACAP partially reimburses eligible apprentices, sponsors and employers for certain costs of related instruction. Although ACAP applies to all trades, WWTPO apprentices will not become eligible due to their late start dates. Eligible apprentices must complete either the first calendar year of their program or their entire program between June 2, 2014 and June 30, 2015.

However, after ACAP concludes, the Bureau plans to present performance data to the Legislature to support continuing the program in subsequent fiscal years.

e. Outreach update

i. WWOA Conference

The Bureau of Apprenticeship received a complementary booth at the Wisconsin Wastewater Operators Association annual conference on October 7 and 8 in Green Bay. Owen asked committee members and consultants for volunteers to assist the Bureau in staffing the booth in two-hour shifts. Booth staff would distribute handouts from BAS, Moraine Park and Gateway Technical College, and the DNR, and discuss the program with visitors.

Action: *Kevin Freber, Kelly Zimmer, Marty Dierker, and Mark Schmidt volunteered. Owen Smith agreed to email an availability survey to them.*

ii. BAS trade page

The Bureau of Apprenticeship website contains informational pages on many individual trades, which are organized by economic sector. Each trade's page follows the same outline: interesting facts; an occupational description, including tasks; working conditions; training outline; application requirements; necessary skills; points of contact; and additional resources.

Owen Smith asked the committee whether it would like the Bureau to develop a trade page for the WWTPPO occupation. Members agreed.

Action: *The committee requested that the Bureau create an individual trade page for the occupation. The committee, representatives from Moraine Park and Gateway Technical Colleges, and the DNR volunteered to review the language. Jake Saltes recommended DNR staff member Danielle Luke. While the page is being drafted, the Bureau will post "coming soon" on the BAS webpage.*

iii. Municipality brochure

The program needs plants to sponsor apprentices. Therefore, the committee recommended developing an outreach brochure specifically targeted at municipal plants, the largest demographic of plants in the state.

Owen asked members for their input on content. Suggestions for program information included: training requirements; information on DNR certification; and apprentice outcomes, such as "very skilled" and "very close to being advanced operators."

Suggestions on the broader context on the need for skilled workers included: the imminent problem of retiring skilled workers; nobody is laying off operators; the length of time it takes to train a skilled operator; the fact that training is not a short-turn around; training worker outside of the plant is expensive; and how apprenticeship helps skilled workers pass along the expertise of their current workforce.

Additional suggestion included: the question, "How would it work for you to train your next generation of workers?"; the tag line, "Grow Your Own [workers]"; step-by-step instructions for how a municipality would register as a sponsor, specifically a mid-sized plant; and the fact that most plants will soon be considered "advanced" plants.

Jack Saltes volunteered Lisa Bushy, DNR staff member, for the brochure review team.

iv. Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit

Owen Smith summarized that various trades requested that the Bureau add links to information on their trade to the Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit website to help educators and guidance counselors learn

about their occupation and talk about it with students and parents. The links that the committee recommended at the spring meeting, the Wisconsin Wastewater Operator Association (WWOA) homepage and the DNR Operation Certification page, seemed more useful to audiences familiar with and engaged in the industry. Therefore, Owen asked the committee whether it wanted to identify alternative sites and publications that target unfamiliar audiences, such as *Following the Flow* by the Water Environment Federation.

A general discussion followed on the benefits and drawbacks of the initial sites proposed by the committee and the alternative sites proposed by Owen, as well as the roles and presence of WWOA and DNR in the industry. Kelly Zimmer, a member of the WWOA, agreed that the WWOA website does not include a description of the occupation that is easily accessible. Kevin Freber, current president of the WWOA, stated that he will recommend revisions to the WWOA website to the organization's board. Jack Saltes agreed that the DNR Operator Certification homepage was similarly lacking in content targeted at individuals unfamiliar with the occupation. The committee and several consultants agreed that although those websites needed to better target audiences unfamiliar with the occupation, they should still be included in the Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit.

Action: *A motion was approved to include links to the WWOA homepage, the DNR Operator Certification webpage, and the future BAS trade page in the Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit.*

Action: *To address all outreach items, Owen Smith will convene an outreach focus group of all volunteers during the winter.*

f. Other

No additional items were discussed.

5. New Business

a. BAS personnel update

The Bureau projects it will fill the vacancy for the Waukesha–area Apprenticeship Training Representative by November 1.

b. For action: removing "> 1MGD" from employer minimum qualifications

The committee requested at the spring 2014 meeting that the Bureau remove the qualification that plants must process at least 1 MGD in order to sponsor an apprentice. However, the item was not listed as an action item on the agenda. The Bureau incorporated the committee's request into its outreach efforts, and included this item on the agenda for an official vote.

Action: *A motion was approved to eliminate the requirement for plants to process at least 1 MGD from the State Apprenticeship Standards for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator. The Bureau will revise the standards accordingly.*

c. BAS continuous improvements efforts: review of State Committee Exhibit A

The state Exhibit A, approved by the state committee, is the foundational document for every apprentice contract for the trade. It establishes the minimum standards that must be met by all local sponsors. The Bureau literally uses it as the template to create local standards and apprenticeship contracts. Thus, the language must be clear, legal, and consistent to ensure industry training needs are met and all parties understand the training contract. This fall and winter, the state committee and Bureau will review all state Exhibit As. The review has three possible outcomes: no revisions necessary; minor revisions suggested; or substantial revisions suggested.

d. For action: proposed minor revisions to state Exhibit A

Owen Smith explained that the Bureau proposed minor revisions to the Special Provisions section of the state Exhibit A for clarity.

Action: A motion was approved to accept all revisions. BAS will revise the Exhibit A accordingly.

e. Advisory Council update: Wisconsin Career Pathway Advisory Subcommittee

Owen Smith reported that apprenticeship continues to receive national attention due to a "perfect storm" of factors, and the attention has directly influenced the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council to implement significant new efforts.

Nationally, economists predict an unprecedented shortage of workers in the next five to ten years, due to the progressive retirement of the baby boomer generation and concurrent lack of young adult workers to replace them. In addition, more countries, sectors and industries are expressing interest in apprenticeship training: the German embassy is promoting the adoption of the German model of apprenticeship within German companies operating the U.S.; new federal funding will target developing apprenticeship programs in the health care and information technology sectors; and advanced manufacturing companies, enduring stakeholders of apprenticeship, continue to adopt the model to train workers in new occupations. Last, these changes necessitate creating and expanding pipeline programs into apprenticeship, especially by offering credentials or advanced credit.

At its 2014 third-quarter meeting, the Apprenticeship Advisory Council approved the creation of the Wisconsin Career Pathway Advisory Subcommittee. The new subcommittee will oversee the development of bridges between youth apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs, and will be co-led by representatives of both staffs.

The strategy will be to introduce youth to certain trades and skills through youth apprenticeship, and award them credit towards a related registered apprenticeship, in which they would learn the trade in its entirety. Linking the programs through credit is feasible because the programs utilize training checklists that are very similar: youth apprenticeship program utilize a "skill standards checklist," and registered apprenticeship programs utilize job books.

The subcommittee will likely target manufacturing and health care sectors first.

Members expressed support for raising the awareness of skilled occupations among high school juniors and seniors.

f. American Apprenticeship Grants update

This year the U.S. Department of Labor is projected to make applications available for \$100m in American Apprenticeship Grants. The competitive grants will be awarded to partnerships that

- launch apprenticeship models in new fields, such as advanced manufacturing and health care;
- align apprenticeships to career pathways by rewarding workplace learning with college credit or linking to pre-apprenticeship programs;
- and scale apprenticeship models that work by marketing the value of apprenticeship, or building national and regional partnerships to expand apprenticeships

The maximum grant award is \$5m.

To prepare for the grant application, the Bureau convened two industry focus group: one for the construction sector, one from the manufacturing sector. This strategy of engaging industry early proved excellent for the SAGE grant: by identifying numerous potential ways in which grant money could upgrade apprenticeship programs, the Bureau was able to submit a more robust grant application, more quickly.

Although the specific requirements of the American Apprenticeship Grants are yet to be announced, the industry focus groups convened by the Bureau identified these potential uses:

- increasing the apprenticeship "pipeline" by promoting and developing pre-apprenticeship programs, apprenticeship prep programs and linkages between youth and registered apprenticeship, including transcribed credit
- develop outreach materials and events targeted at parents and educators to improve the perception of skilled trades as viable, valid professions. Efforts might include media campaigns, print publication, and tours of local facilities given by partners organizations, such as local chambers of commerce. All efforts would utilize social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.
- develop mentoring programs for skilled workers, possibly by increasing the availability of transition to trainer courses
- encouraging all apprenticeship programs to require apprentices to complete WTCS general education requirements so apprentice graduate with two nationally recognized credentials – the completion certificate and an AAS degree

Members inquired into how the grant might be used to expand awareness of the WWTPPO program. Outreach activity would qualify as an allowable activity under the grant, part of expanding existing apprenticeship programs. The Bureau will likely focus mostly on expanding pipelines into apprenticeship, but will consider the idea.

g. Introduction of WorkKeys in high schools and potential related changes

The Bureau and WTCS jointly decided to table this item until spring 2015, when the item is timelier and more research can be prepared on its potential impacts.

h. Other

No additional items were discussed.

6. DNR Update

Lisa Bushby shared that she has been receiving calls from job seekers in the Milwaukee area who are interested in becoming an operator but do not know which facilities are hiring. She asked whether the DNR, Bureau, committee or technical colleges could do anything to help job seekers find employment., such as provide a list of facilities per county.

Mike Schuck supported the idea, and stated that Gateway has been experiencing the opposite: municipalities are looking for skilled candidates. He volunteered to host information sessions in the

Gateway area or initiate partnerships with local job service outlets. Lisa Bushy added that the DNR could provide a list of municipalities by county to all partners.

Action: *DNR will provide a list of municipalities by county to all partners. Gateway Technical College will explore hosting information sessions in its service area.*

Jack Saltes reported that NR 114 was published on June 30, 2014, and will be effective on July 2, 2015. The delay in implementation allows the DRN and its partners time to prepare and implement necessary administrative procedures, such as updated study exam. The DNR developed a handout to answer frequently asked questions, particularly about whether operators will be grandfathered into the new requirements.

The revised rule introduces a new paradigm: a point system towards advanced certification. Completing an apprenticeship, by code, earns the individual six points towards advanced certification.

Plants can receive advanced status, too. The rule will likely increase the number of advanced plants in the future, which will increase the need for advanced operators. However, at the current time the DNR has yet to identify which organization will offer the advanced course. The course delivery would have to be flexible and include night and weekend hours.

7. WTCS Update

a. Moraine Park

Fred Rice reported that Moraine Park has three apprentices enrolled; two work in small systems and one works in a large system. All of the apprentices are doing well, and the employers expressed their belief in the success of the program. Fred distributed copies of the college's outreach pamphlet.

b. Gateway Technical College

Mike Schuck reported that many municipalities have expressed interest in the program, and have asked the college for eligible candidates. The college and Sandy Martin, area Apprenticeship Training Representative, continue to conduct outreach presentations to municipalities, commissioners and industry trade organizations. A key point of their presentation is that paid related instruction is available in both online and face-to-face formats. Mike distributed copies of the college's outreach brochure and related instruction summary.

c. Madison Area Technical College

Jim Cook reported that that the college recently welcomed a new dean, and is in the process of restructuring many aspects of its apprenticeship programs. MATC is not going to promote the WWTPO program until it sees the success of online instruction through Moraine Park and receives requests from industry.

8. Review program participants

As of September 1, 2014, two apprentices and two sponsors are enrolled currently in the program, according to the Bureau. However, Moraine Park reported that three apprentices and three sponsors are enrolled.

Action: *The Bureau will research the data discrepancy.*

- 9.** The next meeting date and location March 18, Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. at Moraine Park Technical College, Fond Du Lac.

10. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Follow-up Items

As a result of the meeting, the follow actions will be taken:

- i. The Bureau will revise the roster. Kevin Freber will email WWOA membership for candidates.
- ii. The Bureau will email an availability survey to Kevin Freber, Kelly Zimmer, Marty Dierker, and Mark Schmidt to determine the schedule for staffing the WWOA conference booth.
- iii. The Bureau will create an individual trade page for the occupation. The committee, representatives from Moraine Park and Gateway Technical Colleges, and the DNR volunteered to review the language. Jake Saltes recommended DNR staff member Danielle Luke. While the page is being drafted, the Bureau will post "coming soon" on the BAS webpage.
- iv. The Bureau will include links to the WWOA homepage, the DNR Operator Certification webpage, and the future BAS trade page.
- v. The Bureau will convene an outreach focus group of all volunteers during the winter.
- vi. The Bureau will research the data discrepancy.
- vii. The Bureau will eliminate the requirement for plants to process at least 1 MGD from the Section VIII: Minimum Qualifications of Employers of State Apprenticeship Standards for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator. The motion was seconded and approved. The Bureau will revise the standards accordingly.
- viii. The Bureau will revise the Exhibit A.

Submitted by Owen Smith, Program and Policy Analyst.