

New Year Shows Promise



The holidays are over, family is gone and it is back to the grindstone to await the next long weekend—Memorial Day. Quite a stretch, but I will cut to the chase. Now is the time to make our new year's resolutions. How can we make some informed resolutions for our businesses? Why, by listening to the people in the trenches—to industry members themselves.

Each January I ask various industry professionals to reflect on the previous year and share with us their visions for the upcoming year. With the Sept. 11 tragedy, a falling, unstable economy and a slow-down in technical developments, the challenge is great and the information plentiful for these individuals to draw upon.

Obviously the major news this year was the Sept. 11 attacks. The events of this day created many questions for the water industry. Is it in the terrorists agenda to attack us through our water systems? Is it even possible? What is the role of POU/POE in such an attack, and what can we do to prevent it?

The extremely volatile economy also made it difficult to forecast how the water market would be affected. Despite the enormous hit the nation's economy suffered in 2001, some economists are predicting a stronger economy by mid-2002. Should more money be sunk into developing new technologies and processes? Should marketing become a top priority? Would the industry suffer such fates as the technology industry has experienced? Would it see profit due to consumer awareness and possible threats?

On page 12, we begin this year's "Industry Predictions," which may be able to help us plan our marketing and business strategies. Jim Goodrich, EPA; C.R. Hall, Culligan dealer and current president of WQA; Ian Knapp, Alamo Water Refiners; Jorge Fernandez, Pentair; Tom Bruusema, NSF; Ed Fierko, Osmonics; and Joseph Doss, president of IBWA, all offer their opinions and views on what is in store for the POU/POE and bottled water industries in 2002.

Despite the down side of a year full of unimaginable trials, one thing is for certain—the water treatment industry has a positive outlook for a profitable 2002.

On that note, I offer you my best wishes for the new year.

Wendi

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