Compiled by Clare Pierson

AMTA Charges Ahead

The American Membrane Technology Association (AMTA) names a new executive director as it continues its quest to make membrane treatment the "go-to" technology for water plants and utilities

Clare Pierson: AMTA has made a lot of progress in the past few years. How do you see the association moving forward in the next couple of years?

Ian Watson: I look forward to the challenge of continuing the impressive growth and interest that AMTA has enjoyed over the past few years. We must continue to improve our product, thereby making AMTA the "go-to" membrane technology source for municipal members, and recruit those agencies as members. This, in turn, will make us more attractive as the primary association for the suppliers and consultants. We must also move forward on the industrial front, which has always been a goal for us but until now has been one of our weakest membership categories.

Pierson: What are some of your personal goals as the new executive director of AMTA?

Watson: When I started, membranes were only available for the treatment of brackish water. Today, there is a "tool" in the membrane toolbox to address virtually every challenge one finds when preparing water for safe and secure public consumption. However, there is still a lot of work to be done in bringing this message to the public water supply administrators and regulators. My primary goal will be to make sure that this group really understands the technology, what it can and cannot do, and how best to apply it for the specific needs of their state, water district or community.

Additionally, we must form strategic alliances with other organizations that at the moment are tending to duplicate what we are doing. I am talking about AWWA, WEF and others. It is important to us all that we act in a complimentary fashion rather than as adversaries. And last but not least, I plan to spend some time in conversation with IDA, the international group with which we are affiliated, to define our common goals and foster a spirit of greater cooperation.

Pierson: How important will it be for AMTA to focus on legislation and government, especially regulatory issues?

Watson: This is very important. One of the major impediments to expanding the spread of membrane technology, particularly the segment that deals with the removal of salt and other dissolved contaminants such as residual pharmaceuticals and personal care products, is the disposal of the waste stream in a safe and environmentally compatible manner. This is particularly critical for inland facilities. AMTA has been working on this issue for many years, particularly here in Florida, and some small gains have been made.

However, we still have a long way to go, and this is an issue that involves not only the states, but also the EPA and Congress. The issue is being addressed in Washington, but it is critical that we advocate the direction to go as one voice. This gets back to forming alliances with AWWA and the other national organizations that have a stake in the future of membrane technology.

Pierson: How accepting do you think the American public has been of membrane technologies for water treatment? Do you think there are still some concerns?

Watson: I think it depends on where you live. In Florida, where the first significant brackish water, reverse osmosis (RO) treatment plant started up in 1972, there is, 150 or so facilities later, a general acceptance of the technology. One of my RosTek Associates clients in North Carolina, the Dare County Utilities Department, provides 75% of the drinking water consumed by residents and summer visitors alike from RO plants at Kill Devil Hills, two plants on Hatteras Island and a small plant on the mainland. Consequently, there is wide acceptance of the technology there also, and a side benefit is that the summer visitors take this knowledge home with them. In the future, as more facilities are placed into service around the country, public acceptance will be almost routine.

Nevertheless, AMTA still must play a major role in the education process, which we base on regional workshops, the publication of fact sheets and white papers, and so on. I believe that the public is generally concerned about two things: environmental impact and energy sustainability. Those are two of the issues that I will be addressing.

Pierson: What kind of role will you play and what kind of activities will you be involved in at the AMTA show in Naples, Fla., in July?

Watson: My role will be developing from day one. I do have to do a little work as a session chairman and in addition, I will be talking to the attendees, getting a feel for their response to our efforts and getting input from them so that we can make the Austin 2009 Annual Conference even more successful than Naples. WWD

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EPA Helps Secure San Francisco's Drinking Water

The U.S. EPA awarded an $8 million grant to San Francisco to help the city develop and evaluate a drinking water contamination warning system for its drinking water supply.

The pilot project, called the Water Security Initiative, is expected to serve as a model for the nation's drinking water utilities.

Water Industry Leaders Launch Water Policy Institute

The Water Policy Institute, founded by Kathy Robb of the law firm Hunton & Williams LLP, will address water-related issues and provide information to the public through its website. The members of the institute will discuss and review current challenges affecting both global and local water issues including supply, quality, use, wildlife and agricultural concerns and climate change.

WEF Files Brief in Biosolids Litigation

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) recently filed an amicus curiae brief in the Kern County, Calif., biosolids litigation that has attracted national attention. WEF supports three public agencies that operate land application programs in Kern County.

The outcome of the Kern County case is significant because this will be the first appellate decision on whether biosolids bans are legal under the federal Constitution.

Aquatech Awarded Contract in Hawaii

Aquatech Intl. Corp. recently received a water treatment contract for the Hawaiian Electric Co.'s 110-mW simple cycle biofueled power plant at the Campbell Industrial Park in Hawaii.

The system design offers optimum use of components while treating three different feed waters: saline groundwater, tertiary-treated grey water and potable city water with high silica.

EPA Administrator Receives WWEMA Environmental Stewardship Award

U.S. EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson was presented the inaugural Environmental Stewardship Award by the Water and Wastewater Equipment Manufacturers Association (WWEMA) on April 16, 2008, at the association's 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner held in conjunction with WWEMA's 35th Washington Forum in Washington, D.C.

The event was attended by government officials, association leaders, equipment manufacturers and manufacturer representatives.

IFAT China 2008 Open for Registration

IFAT China, the 3rd International Trade Fair for Water, Sewage, Refuse, Recycling and Natural Energy Sources, will be held Sept. 23 to 25 at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre in Shanghai, China.

The fair covers an extensive range of solutions in the areas of water supply, sewage, waste disposal, recycling, air pollution control, environmental technology and natural energy sources. More information can be found at www.ifat-china.com.

TenX Ventures Acquires Sparling Instruments, Inc.

TenX Ventures, LLC has announced the acquisition of Sparling Instruments, Inc. Sparling designs and manufactures flowmeters for the water and wastewater flow measurement markets, as well as for general industrial flow measurement markets.

With the acquisition, Yosufi Tyebkhan, TenX Ventures managing partner, will become president of Sparling Instruments. Steve Kim, Sparling's current president, will remain in an advisory role through a transition period.

WWEMA & *WWD* Now Accepting 2008 Scholarship Applications

The Water & Wastewater Equipment Manufacturers Association, Inc. and *Water & Wastes Digest* are currently accepting applications for the 2008 WWEMA/*WWD* Scholarship. The $1,000 scholarship is awarded to a student seeking a career in a water or wastewater field.

Students who have parents employed by a WWEMA-member company are eligible to apply.

The recipient must be accepted into a four-year bachelor's program in an acceptable and relevant field of study by an accredited institution of higher learning.

Applications are judged on the basis of: academic achievement; leadership and community service; level of commitment to environmental protection as demonstrated in an essay and stated career goals; and overall presentation including emphasis in science courses, relevance of program of study, sincerity of commitment and demonstration of special need.

The application submission deadline is Oct. 17, 2008. Applications can be obtained by e-mail at wwdeditor@sgcmail.com or by calling 847.391.1011. WWD

News Compiled by Rebecca Wilhelm

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