

2011 awaits



Neda Simeonova, editorial director
nsimeonova@sgcmail.com

As we turn the calendar page to 2011, it is common to take a look back at some of the major events of 2010 and reflect on what has turned out to be an interesting year.

The past year started with a devastating 7.0-magnitude earthquake that destroyed most of Haiti's infrastructure. Approximately 230,000 people were killed, more than 300,000 injured and more than a million left homeless.

This event was soon followed by an Icelandic volcano by the unpronounceable name of Eyjafjallajökull erupting for a second time. The massive cloud of smoke and ash forced the cancellation of 95,000 flights over Europe.

Soon after, BP's Deepwater Horizon offshore floating oil rig exploded and killed 11 workers. The three-month oil leak reached the shores of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, causing devastating effects on the environment.

Thankfully, the events of 2010 were not all about natural disasters. After prolonged debates and much contradiction, President

Obama signed health care into law, ensuring medical coverage for Americans. This legislation was soon followed by the signing of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

Other significant events included the successful rescue of 33 Chilean miners who were saved through a tiny capsule taken up a narrow shaft after being trapped for close to 70 days below the earth.

Eager Apple fans were able to get their hands on Apple's first tablet computer, the iPad. The New Orleans Saints defeated the Indianapolis Colts to win Super Bowl XLIV, and here in my hometown of Chicago, the Blackhawks won the Stanley Cup.

Of course, we cannot forget the sweeping November midterm elections, which brought Republicans full control of the House and six additional seats in the Senate.

On the water front, talk of stimulus funding and infrastructure remained present throughout the year. In the last days of 2010, consumers' water quality concerns grew as hexavalent chromium (chromium-6) made the news with the release of an Environmental Working Group study, which tested tap water in 35 U.S. cities and found that chromium-6 was present in 31 of them.

The report led U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson to meet with a group of 10 senators and commit to assessing occurrence of chromium-6, as well as offering technical assistance to water systems on how to test and sample drinking water for chromium-6. This development likely will result in firmer EPA drinking water standards.

As we head into 2011, it is hard to predict what new challenges and opportunities await. Personally, I hope that we will continue to witness an overall economic improvement. I am also hopeful that consumers' awareness about water and infrastructure will continue to shift from the prevalent "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" mentality to a more holistic approach—one that takes into consideration long-term environmental and consumer needs for generations to come. Most of all, I would like to wish all of our readers a very productive and prosperous 2011!

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6900 E. Camelback, Suite 400 • Scottsdale, AZ 85251
tel: 480.941.0510 • fax: 480.423.1443

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Water & Wastes Digest is published exclusively for the 85,000+ decision makers in the municipal and industrial water, wastewater and water pollution industries. These individuals actively design, specify, buy, operate and maintain the equipment, chemicals and services used for water treatment. Editorial content in this audited publication highlights new products and technologies concerning the supply, collection, treatment and distribution of drinking water; the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater; and hazardous waste pollution control. A product directory is included in the annual June Buyer's Guide.

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