

Power Puzzle



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Ask any water or wastewater facility manager and he or she will agree that the economic decline of the last few years has led to a significant shortfall of affordable funding for cities and districts that must complete critical infrastructure improvements in order to maintain compliance with federal and state regulations. And if funding challenges weren't enough, rising energy costs continue to put pressure on already tight operating budgets.

The U.S. population currently exceeds 311 million, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census. As population growth spurs, so does the demand for water. This, unfortunately, leads to proportional energy demand, adding even more pressure to communities, especially those in water-starved areas.

It is a well-known fact that energy is closely tied to the treatment of water and wastewater, and energy use can vary widely among different municipal systems.

To avoid rate hikes, not to mention rolling blackouts—which lead to considerable socioeconomic and environmental

stress on communities—many water and wastewater utilities have started to enact strict energy conservation and efficiency measures. Projects typically include anything from revisions of operation schedules to increases in water storage, installation of efficient water system equipment or installation of variable frequency drives and advanced equipment controls.

Certainly, energy conservation efforts don't come cheap. Many of these improvement projects require a lot of upfront investment—not only in new technologies, but also time and additional personnel. The long-term energy savings, however, tend to deliver a quick return on investment.

But utilities' efforts don't stop with conservation. As part of their plan to implement comprehensive strategies to reduce their energy use, some utilities have turned to generating the majority of their electrical needs through renewable biogas, energy generated on site and solar power. For more information on energy conservation and generation strategies, be sure to review this month's special section on Energy Efficiency (see pages 36 to 39), as well as *WWD* Managing Editor Caitlin Cunningham's Q&A with Lee E. Ferrell, water/wastewater energy and process consultant for Schneider Electric, on energy audits (see page 50).

As the water and wastewater industry continues to study the water-energy relationship and piece together the power puzzle, I am certain that we will continue to see increased commitments by utilities to reduce energy consumption and look for alternative means to supplement their energy needs.

On a different note, be sure to review *WWD*'s News Briefs section (see page 50) to learn about the 6th Annual Water Buffalo motorcycle ride set for June, which will raise money for Water For People.



COMING UP NEXT MONTH ...

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- Pipe Maintenance & Repair
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E-mail the individual's name, title and company information as well as a brief explanation of how he or she has helped shape the world of water and wastewater to wwd50anniversary@gmail.com.

E-mail a 50-word technology description along with a high-resolution image to wwd50anniversary@gmail.com.

50th

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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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