

Compiled by WWD Associate Editor Elizabeth Lisican

Call for Rural Action

More support is needed to secure U.S. water infrastructure



Erik Johnston

As associate legislative director of the National Association of Counties (NACo), Erik Johnston works with the nation's rural counties on legislative issues. A major area of focus is infrastructure funding and financing. Johnston spoke with WWD Associate Editor Elizabeth Lisican about the ongoing challenges regarding water and wastewater funding and financing, and the somber realities that lie ahead.

Elizabeth Lisican: How does the work you do with rural counties on legislative issues tie into water and wastewater treatment?

Erik Johnston: I work as staff liaison to NACo's Rural Action Caucus (RAC). NACo's bipartisan RAC serves as the voice of America's rural counties before Congress and the administration. Supporting USDA Rural Development's programs in the Farm Bill and appropriations processes is a key priority for NACo's RAC. USDA Rural Development funds a broad range of programs that are critical to rural counties. These programs include funding for water and wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband, electric, telephone, housing, renewable energy and business development.

Our rural counties consistently rank USDA Rural Development's water and wastewater infrastructure programs as one of the key programs utilized by their communities. We consistently call on Congress to support this funding, which is critical to the economic future of our rural counties.

Lisican: What major challenges is USDA Rural Development facing in terms of water/wastewater financing and funding?

Johnston: Nearly all federal programs funded through the annual congressional appropriations process have been cut substantially in the past two years, and these programs face even greater cuts in the future. USDA Rural Development's investments have already made a disproportionate contribution to deficit reduction, as investments in this critical area have fallen by nearly one-third since 2003. These huge cuts to Rural Development come at a time when the rural communities and individuals we represent most need access to the agency's grants and loans. Action to reverse this decline in funding and the impending deeper cuts signaled by the discretionary spending

targets of the Budget Control Act (BCA) are critical to helping rural individuals create and sustain vibrant rural communities and regions.

NACo is advocating that the joint federal deficit committee, or so-called "super-committee," consider all expenditures, including defense, foreign aid and federal entitlement reform, along with other domestic spending. Additionally, revenue enhancements should not be left "off the table." Although reducing discretionary domestic spending is part of the answer, it cannot—and should not—be the only sector that is considered. If there is to be pain, it must be shared. This type of approach is critical if key infrastructure investments, such as water and wastewater financing, are to be spared from drastic cuts.

NACo also leads the Campaign for a Renewed Rural Development, which is a collaboration of 32 national organizations with a strong interest in the future of small-town and rural America. Our organizations are working individually and collectively to support rural development programs and strategies that promote rural prosperity. The campaign is working to highlight the need for key infrastructure investments as water and wastewater projects in the appropriations process.

Lisican: Where do you see water and wastewater infrastructure funding and financing trends headed in the coming years?

Johnston: The reality is that federal assistance for water and wastewater infrastructure funding and financing will decrease over the next decade. The recently passed BCA backloaded cuts. Therefore, in the coming years you will see increasing percentage cuts, with the highest cuts to come 10 years out. A concerted effort to highlight the critical nature of key water and wastewater infrastructure investments is needed to help minimize cuts. **WWD**

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WWEMA Supports National Infrastructure Bill

The Water and Wastewater Equipment Manufacturers Assn. (WWEMA) supports



the National Infrastructure Development Bank bill to create an innovative public-private partnership that will invest in infrastructure projects while creating more than 427,000 new construction, engineering and contracting jobs nationwide.

Modeled after the European Investment Bank, the bill would leverage private-sector dollars to invest in transportation, environmental, energy and telecommunications infrastructure projects.

WWEMA said the legislation would be significant for cities that face a \$500-billion investment gap in drinking water and wastewater needs, and also caution against restrictive policies that could hurt U.S. competitiveness.

WATEC Israel 2011 Scheduled for November



This fall, water professionals from all over the world will gather at the WATEC 2011

Conference in Tel Aviv, Israel. Hosted at the Tel Aviv Fairgrounds Center, the conference will have numerous exhibitions, presentations and networking opportunities to promote innovation and partnerships in the water and wastewater industry.

Attendees also will have the opportunity to partake in the Cleanvest Summit, held Nov. 14 at the Sheraton Tel Aviv Hotel & Towers. Visit www.watec-israel.com for registration and program details.

Pueblo, Colo., Recognized for Solar Power

The U.S. EPA presented a Clean Water State



Revolving Fund award to the city of Pueblo, Colo., for improvements to the community's wastewater treatment system via solar power. Diane Sanelli, director of EPA's state revolving fund program in Denver, presented the award to City Council President Ray Aguilera. The 200-kW array is making the city's operations more sustainable by reducing pollution and operating costs.

In 2009, the city of Pueblo received \$1.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for the installation of a solar photovoltaic power system at the James R. Dilorio Water Reclamation Facility. The water and wastewater industry uses 7% of the electricity generated globally.

Water For People Launches Fundraising Campaign

Water For People has launched a Crowdrise.com campaign in an effort

to raise \$2 million through an online fundraising platform. Water For People donors are modernizing their philanthropy, leveraging their \$1-million pledge by challenging supporters to raise another \$1 million.



The two-month campaign, Donate to Drink, will run through Oct. 31. It kicked off with a \$150,000 donation from CH2M Hill. Funds raised through the campaign will benefit the areas in which Water For People currently works—Africa, Asia, Central America and South America—and aid the organization's mission to ensure no one suffers or dies from a water- or sanitation-related disease.

Green Energy Generation Facility Announced



W2E Organic Power, CIYCOR and Eisenmann have announced

plans to construct and operate a state-of-the-art anaerobic digestion facility in Columbia, S.C. W2E Organic Power will supervise construction of the 48,000-ton-per-year, 3.2-MW facility, and organic waste will be processed and turned into natural gas for electric power production.

The W2E facility is a sustainable, renewable energy facility returning nutrients from the organic waste to the earth. Soil amendment produced by the facility will be used for local agriculture as well as commercial and residential landscape applications.

Aquatech Amsterdam to Ignite Industry Dialogue

On Nov. 1, water professionals from all over the world will gather for Aquatech



Amsterdam 2011, a trade exhibition for the global water industry. The four-day event in the Netherlands will feature a myriad of presentations, workshops, networking and entertainment opportunities for attendees, including a two-day workshop on Europe's new Water Framework Directive.

Coinciding with the tradeshow is International Water Week Amsterdam. Guests are invited to attend Aquaterra, a conference on water management in low-lying, densely populated deltas; the International Water Week Conference; and excursions to water treatment installations.

Networking News

Kelly Zito was appointed director of the EPA's Office of Public Affairs.

Dewberry named Glenn D. Pearson, P.E., regional manager for the company's mid-Atlantic region.

ETI, a Pennsylvania-based water treatment company, is celebrating its 25th year of service. **WWD**