

# Not Another Resolution List



**B**ehold the New Year. Editorial letters like this often rehash top happenings from the previous year or predict some ultra-exciting occurrences for the upcoming year, but, much like my New Year's Resolutions, sometimes I question whether or not the ensuing year will actually deliver on those monumental expectations. But that is beside the point.

In any event, space is limited, and I have already wasted some by sharing my skepticism of beginning-of-the-year editorials, so I will compromise with a list of what I consider to be the most trending topics for 2014:

**Population surge.** The United Nations estimates 1.2 billion people (about one-fifth of the world's population) are challenged by water scarcity. That number is projected to morph into 1.8 billion people plagued by *absolute* water scarcity by 2025. It is a sure bet that business expansions will keep the idea of water availability top of mind as an investment consideration.

**Waste not the wastewater.** Keeping the statistics above in mind, in September 2013, the UN's think tank on water—the United National University Institute for Water, Environment and Health—predicted a rapid rise in the use of treated wastewater “for irrigation and other needs.” One example of this occurring in the industrial arena close to home is software giant Intel's development of a cutting-edge industrial water efficiency and conservation strategy: Its Ocotillo Campus is partnering with the city of Chandler, Ariz., to establish a water efficiency program that conserves approximately 5.2 million gal per day of water, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Other water-stressed regions of the U.S. likely are taking notes; it will be interesting to see what other similar partnerships might be born.

**Big data guzzles.** Speaking of software giants, consider how water relates to big data centers. Facebook, for example, began tracking its water usage effectiveness in 2013 in an effort to build one of the most efficient computing infrastructures ever, according to the Open Compute Project. Big data is a boom, as is natural gas; that is not going to change anytime soon.

**Frack on.** Be prepared to continue hearing the seemingly endless discussions on hydrofracturing. Seriously, I am talking every time a tiny earthquake occurs—or even at the mere mention of the word “earthquake”—the Internet will be abuzz with strong statements from both sides of the coin. Adding another ingredient to an already bubbling pot will be EPA's promised release of a draft report for public comment and peer review of its “Study of Hydraulic Fracturing and Its Potential Impact on Drinking Water Resources” at some point this year.

All of these issues could spawn editorial letters of their own, and they are a sampling of what I plan to explore further in upcoming issues of *iWWD*. With increased competition for water, potential for business disruption due to changes in volume or quality of water, and efforts to increase water efficiency and protect quality, I think it is safe to say that while progress will take place on all of these fronts, there is no telling what might happen in our industry.

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