



Kenosha Water Utility employees honored at state conference

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For further information contact:
Curt Czarnecki
General Manager
Kenosha Water Utility
4401 Green Bay Road
Kenosha, WI 53144

T: 262-653-4306
cczarnecki@kenosha.org

KENOSHA – The hard work, dedication and ingenuity of Kenosha Water Utility staff was recognized at the Wisconsin Section of American Water Works Association’s (WIAWWA) 102nd Annual Conference last week in Madison. The 2023 Operator Meritorious Award was presented to Robert Wienke, Lead Operator at the O. Fred Nelson Water Production Plant, and the Gimmicks and Gadgets Award was presented to Andrew Lorsung, Engineering Technician.

The Operator Meritorious Award is an American Water Works Association (AWWA) award given annually by WIAWWA to a water supply or distribution individual to recognize special performance in one or more areas of operations.

Wienke’s dedication and skill at production plant operation and maintenance throughout his 29-year career helps ensure the Kenosha Water Utility continues to provide high quality and safe drinking water to customers, according to Curt Czarnecki, General Manager of the

Kenosha Water Utility.

Wienke, lead operator since 2014, has developed several innovations during his career that have helped improve operations, minimize maintenance and reduce costs. He lead the design and construction of the Utility's lead pipe loop for optimal corrosion control treatment testing. His skills helped to allow the Utility to design, build and operate their pipe loop system completely in-house. His dedication is evident in his availability via phone call or to come in 24/7 for other plant operators or emergencies. Wienke frequently volunteers to help promote the drinking water industry and the public utility at local events.

Czarnecki stated, "Wienke's contributions to plant operations are outstanding. His knowledge of the plant is extensive, and he is regularly relied on when making operating decisions. His dedication to the plant, fellow employees, and the public has been tremendous."

The Gimmicks and Gadgets Award is given to an individual or utility who successfully developed an innovative tool or technique to address an operation or maintenance need. Andrew Lorsung was nominated for his ingenuity in modifying the existing closed circuit televising equipment utilized by the Utility to inspect large diameter sewer mains.

Kenosha has many large diameter buried pipes with high flows that are difficult to inspect without causing service outages to customers and incurring high costs from outside contractors, according to Czarnecki. He noted that current televising equipment on the market does not meet this need, however Lorsung crafted a tool out of everyday items that helped provide insight into the condition of the City's critical infrastructure.

"This innovative approach allowed inspection of sewer mains that otherwise would not have been possible and will be utilized in similar situations in the future," Czarnecki said.

"These two well deserved awards help illustrate the hard work, dedication, technical knowledge and innovation that Kenosha Water Utility employees contribute on a daily basis in an effort to help provide and protect Kenosha's greatest natural resource."