2016 WILBUR E. LONG
WASTEWATER OPERATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Congratulations to Barnard “Sonny” Penson, recipient of the 2016 Wilbur E. Long Operator of the Year Award. On April 11, 2017, Corey Basinger, Chairman of the Water Pollution Control System Operator Certification Commission, presented the award at the Town of Forest City.

Sonny’s professionalism, positive attitude and dedication to numerous projects made him the stand out candidate for the 2016 award.

Sonny worked diligently to identify, locate and abate sources of heavy metals present in the domestic wastewater of the Riverstone WWTP that had resulted in aquatic toxicity failures. He applied intelligent and thoughtful investigatory techniques and teamwork while working closely with the Asheville Regional Office.

Through Sonny’s thoughtful and determined approach, previously unidentified cross connections and other sources of heavy metals were identified and then eliminated from the wastewater. It is anticipated that Sonny’s efforts will lead to a significant and permanent improvement in effluent water quality from the Riverstone facility.

Sonny and other Forest City staff were also instrumental in assisting DEQ field staff during a fish kill event. Their knowledge of local conditions and access points, and their efforts in gathering information were critical to a safe and effective DEQ response.

Sonny and his supervisor Jeff Dotson serve as mentors and examples to the other members of the Forest City wastewater staff. Their demonstration of leadership and problem solving influences all wastewater operators to strive for excellence.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2017 WILBUR E. LONG AWARD
CLOSE SEPTEMBER 1!

Do you know a wastewater operator that:
- excels in their field,
- exhibits outstanding knowledge,
- contributes significant effort to training and professionalism, or
- has developed novel techniques that enhance wastewater system operation?

NOMINATION FORM

2017 Exam Dates

Wastewater
September 14
December 14

Drinking Water
August 31
September 26 (electronic)
October 26

Applications are due 30 days prior to exam date.

CONTACT US:
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PASSING THE BATON... New Operators Needed!

Many water utilities face staffing challenges as longtime industry professionals approach retirement age. According to a recent online article, utilities have a higher proportion of workers eligible for retirement than other industries (Succession Planning for Emergency Preparedness).

An industry panel recently gathered to discuss the issues of an aging workforce and the following concepts were emphasized by the panel:

1. Better use of technology can help assure utilities provide the level of service customers expect (geographic information systems, asset management, defined capital improvement plans and customer information systems).

2. Technology can present challenges in finding employees with the skills needed to utilize such technologies as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI).

3. Recognize the value that seasoned employees contribute as they approach retirement and encourage seasoned employees to serve in leadership roles and mentor younger staff.

4. As competition for skilled talent increases, it’s critical to reach students early and provide education to attract future leaders.

5. Industry must find new and innovative ways to attract diverse talent.

Some suggestions to attract new employees include hosting plant tours, making presentations to civic groups and attending career fairs. What is your utility doing to attract new talent?

CONTINUING EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Do you have your 6 hours of continuing education or professional growth hours for 2017?

If not, this is the time of year to be seeking out opportunities and taking advantage of your options. New state-approved courses are added daily, and REMEMBER... the longer you delay, the fewer choices you will have regarding dual credit, location and price. Don’t wait until the end of the year!

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL SYSTEMS OPERATOR CERTIFICATION COMMISSION APPOINTS NEW MEMBERS

The Water Pollution Control Systems Operator Certification Commission (WPCSOCC) met May 12, 2017 and welcomed Matthew Haynes from Valley Proteins, Inc. as its newest member to represent private industry. Arnold Allred and Marchell Adams David were reappointed to the Commission.

The Commission also presented plaques of appreciation to Dr. David Lindbo for 7 years of service and to Butch Howell for 11 years of service to the Commission.

Matthew Haynes, Arnold Allred and Marchell Adams David being sworn in by NC Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall.

Dr. David Lindbo, WPCSOCC Chairman Corey Basinger and Gale “Butch” Howell

CE OPPORTUNITIES  PGH OPPORTUNITIES