

**UTILITIES HELPING UTILITIES: MUTUAL AID RESPONSE NETWORKS
FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS
April 26, 2007 - Minneapolis, MN**

**STATE BASED ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT
WI-WARN**

The Wisconsin group broke out at approximately 1:00 p.m. to discuss state strategies. The group was led by Kevin Morley from AWWA.

Introductions were made. The Wisconsin contingent consisted of: David Denig-Chakroff, Madison Water; Deb Geier, Wausau Water Works; Kim Halverson, Stevens Point Water; Jim Hessling, Village of Cottage Grove; Dave Lawrence, WRWA; John T. MacKinnon, Plymouth Utilities; Linda Mohr, CH2M Hill; Paul Pavlik, Green Bay Water; Nancy Quirk, Waukesha Water Utility; Ed St. Peter, Kenosha Water Utility; Dan Winkler, Lake Geneva. Others joining the meeting included: Kevin Morley, AWWA; Nick Damato and John Wienhoff, US EPA, Region 5; Brad Jewell, Orlando, FL Water Utility.

It was explained that this group represented the Leadership Group. This leadership group could include members that were not from water/wastewater utilities, such as consultants, other government agencies, etc. It was recommended however, that the group size not exceed 8-10 people. An important tie would be to the State Emergency Management. It was also recommended to include private utilities. Another suggestion was to have a representative from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

The group was questioned on whether there were other agencies that should be included in the group, but not necessarily as a voting member. Suggestions included: Milwaukee Met, DNR - specifically Steve Elmore, Department of Homeland Security, PSC. While most of the suggestions were agreeable with the group, a representative from the PSC was questioned, as there was concern on how the PSC would be able to help in encouraging utilities to sign the mutual aid agreements. Other agencies discussed included WRWA, MEG, Central States WWOA. While many of these organizations may not be given voting rights, it was agreed that WRWA would, as they represent the small utilities and OTMs from around the state. It was also noted that some of the larger communities in the state were not represented, such as Milwaukee and LaCrosse.

Tribal nations were also discussed. Many of the tribes have their own water systems and operators. These operators are often willing to obtain training, especially through WRWA, but are hesitant about allowing outsiders onto certain portions of their reservations. It was recommended to contact Mary Morgan with EPA Region 5, as she has contact information for all the tribes.

Brad Jewell, a workshop speaker from Florida, indicated that in Florida they have "X" number of seats for AWWA, WEF, Rural Water, etc.

Kim Halverson, who was planning to attend the Regulatory Affairs Seminar on May 1, was asked to make a short presentation to those attending the seminar to inform them of WI-Warn and its

mission. The Regulatory Affairs Seminar is being co-sponsored by WWA, WRWA, WDNR, PSC and MEG. It was felt this would make a good venue to create interest in mutual aid agreements and the WI-WARN network.

It was noted that decisions need to be made to bring other agencies in the state to the table. Concern was expressed that bringing state (regulatory) agencies too deep into the program will slow down the process and may discourage participation by the utilities who will benefit. Kevin noted that this is an EPA priority. It was also felt that the DNR will be supportive of the process. If utilities see the need for these agreements and the WI-WARN system to happen, it will happen.

The group was asked to think about how to organize a steering committee. Marketing was also discussed. Kevin indicated that he can send displays to help market WI-WARN. He will also be presenting a program on Utilities Helping Utilities at the AWWA Conference in Toronto in June.

It was advised to look at the sample agreements and have legal council review. Lawrie Kobza and Paul Kent, both lawyers serving on MEG were suggested as resources to review and incorporate Wisconsin law/statutes. These revisions could be brought back to a future meeting for discussion. John MacKinnon offered to forward the information to Lawrie and Paul. It was felt that these two attorneys could provide sound advice in the creation of the Mutual Aid Agreements.

A brief discussion followed regarding an equipment/labor database. This may be a difficult concept, although it could prove to be very valuable if a utility needed a specific piece of equipment.

Kevin questioned the group on whether they feel there was going to be "buy-in" by other communities or if we would need to "sell" the concept. It was felt that since Wisconsin does not have the type of natural disasters that many of the coastal states have, this concept will need to be sold to encourage participation. The tangible benefits, such as free involvement, and having a support base in the case of emergency need to be selling points. It was indicated that many counties are developing "All Hazards" plans which are required to obtain Federal funding. Kevin pointed out Appendix F, which is a letter from FEMA to state governors outlining initiatives to be NIMS compliant. He felt that the contents of this letter are not far from becoming law. It was also pointed out that being a part of a WARN system makes it easier to obtain FEMA funds if another community comes to assist. Official buy-in by statewide agencies is important.

The question was raised regarding intra-state versus inter-state. It was suggested to start with intra-state agreements, and from there pursue interstate agreements.

Other points that were brought up included:

- \$ What is goal? To get the larger population centers? Use WRWA to address the smaller communities?
- \$ Need to determine administration of the agreement. Who will be the keeper of the Agreement?
- \$ Each state receives funds from EPA to training and technical assistance. Funds can be used to develop WARN systems.

Next meeting dates: A teleconference will be held on May 10, 2007 from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

At that meeting the group will review feedback from the attorneys and determine the key objectives/mission. Nancy Quirk will arrange for the conference call and forward instructions to the group.

An in-person organizational meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on June 7, 2007 at the WRWA offices in Plover.

The group rejoined the Minnesota delegates and reviewed their respective action plans.