PURPOSE

Maryland Rural Water Association established an Awards Program in 1992 to recognize outstanding effort and accomplishments of member systems, industry members and individuals associated with the rural water systems.

The Awards Program is a way for MRWA to provide visibility and distinction for its members. While only one person, system or organization is selected to receive a specific award, the awards are intended to honor all individuals associated with the system or organization. Award recipients will be recognized at the Awards Luncheon during the MRWA Annual Training Forum & Technology Exhibit Center on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 at the Clarion Resort Hotel in Ocean City, MD.

ELIGIBILITY & SELECTION

All Voting Members, Individual Members and Associate Members of the association are eligible to be nominees, subject to the specific criteria for each category outlined in the enclosed Awards Procedures. Winners from the previous year (2019) will not be eligible for the 2020 program. The MRWA Selection Committee, composed of MRWA staff, will review all nominations and make the final selections for awards. The MRWA Executive Director will chair the Selection Committee.

The awards will be considered in relation to a written set of criteria for each category, which are enclosed with this mailing (also available on MRWA's website). If no nominations are received for a given category, an award will not be presented for the year.

All nominations MUST BE ACCOMPANIED by a short narrative of explanation why the person, system or organization is thought to be deserving of the award. The narrative can consist of something as simple as a numbered list of reasons, or can be as detailed as the nominator would like to make it. Nominations submitted without this narrative will not be considered.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

1. Nominations may be made by any MRWA member in good standing.
2. Nominations MUST include a brief written explanation of the reasons the person making the nomination feels the nominee deserves the award. Individual category descriptions contain examples of reasons that a nominee may be deserving of the award, but the lists are not all-inclusive, and the person making a nomination may state his or her own reasons, so long as the written explanation provides enough background on the nominee for the selection committee to make an informed decision. Nominations without written background will not be considered.
3. Nominations MUST be received in the MRWA office by the deadline set each year to be considered. Nominations received after the deadline will not be considered for the current year, and may be submitted again the following year for consideration.
4. Members of the Selection Committee may also nominate member systems, industry members and individuals associated with the rural water systems.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

1. As soon as practical following the deadline for nominations, written nominations will be copied and distributed to each member of the Selection Committee, and a date will be set for a meeting of the committee.
2. The MRWA Selection Committee will serve as the voting body to review nominations and select winners. Each committee member will have a single vote, and each member may vote on any and all nominations, even those that they themselves submitted. The chair may only vote to break a tie.
3. The Chair of the Selection Committee will entertain discussion of each nominee, including those nominations from the committee members. If a consensus cannot be achieved regarding each award recipient, a majority vote will determine the recipient.
4. The Selection Committee may, by majority vote, eliminate a category or categories from the awards to be given in that year. For multiple categories, each one will be reviewed and its elimination determined separately, rather than as blanket elimination.
**WATER OPERATIONS SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR**

1. Must be currently employed as a water treatment system operations specialist or distribution system operations specialist AND have been employed by that system for at least two (2) years at the time of nomination.
2. Must hold a permanent Water Operator’s license, OR have passed the state test to obtain permanent license with issuance pending, at the time of nomination.
3. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   - Length of service and experience
   - Exceptional effort and dedication in performance of duties
   - Special project or program instituted at the suggestion of, or under the supervision and oversight of the nominee in the past year that has improved the system or its efficiency of operation
   - Demonstration of creative problem-solving skills and attitude
   - Outstanding efforts in system operations under difficult circumstances during the past year
4. May be nominated by any System Representative holding a supervisory/superior role to that of the nominee, or MRWA Staff.

**ROOKIE WATER OPERATIONS SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR**

1. Must be currently employed as a water treatment or distribution system operations specialist AND have been employed by that system for at least three (3) months and not more than two (2) years at the time of nomination.
2. Must hold a temporary Water Operator’s license.
3. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   - Demonstrated eagerness to learn and expand knowledge of treatment process
   - Volume of new information absorbed by the nominee in the time employed
   - Exceptional effort on behalf of the system’s operations
   - Outstanding effort in system operations under difficult circumstances during the past year
4. May be nominated by any System Representative holding a supervisory/superior role to that of the nominee, or MRWA Staff.

**DISTRIBUTION OPERATIONS SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR**

1. Must be currently employed as a distribution system operations specialist OR as a water system operations specialist in a water system which does not separate the treatment and distribution system functions, AND have been employed by that system for at least two (2) years at the time of nomination. If nominated from a system which combines treatment and distribution functions, nominee must spend at least 60% of his/her work time in the distribution systems functions and/or operations.
2. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   - Length of service and experience
   - Exceptional effort and dedication in performance of duties
   - Special project or program instituted at the suggestion of, or under the supervision and oversight of the nominee in the past year that has improved the system or its efficiency of operation
   - Demonstration of creative problem-solving skills and attitude
   - Outstanding efforts in system operations under difficult circumstances during the past year
   - Exceptional quality of customer service and/or response to emergencies in the system
3. May be nominated by any System Representative holding a supervisory/superior role to that of the nominee, or MRWA Staff.

**WATER SYSTEM OF THE YEAR**

1. Must be a community system of 25 or more population AND at least 8 connections.
2. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   - Quality and consistency of treatment process and results
   - Quality and consistency of water service to customers
   - A special new project, program or upgrade instituted within the past year
   - Demonstrated innovation or creativity in addressing a system function, problem or operation; Creative problem-solving attitude is prevalent
   - Exceptional effort by system personnel under difficult circumstances
   - Outstanding professionalism of system operations or management personnel
3. May be nominated by any System Representative in a supervisory/decision making capacity, MDE Representative(s) or MRWA Staff.
AWARD DESCRIPTIONS

WASTEWATER OPERATIONS SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

1. Must be currently employed as a wastewater treatment operations specialist or collection system operations specialist AND have been employed by that system for at least two (2) years at the time of nomination.

2. Must hold a permanent Wastewater Operator’s license, OR have passed the state test to obtain permanent license with issuance pending, at the time of nomination.

3. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   - Length of service and experience
   - Exceptional effort and dedication in performance of duties
   - Special project or program instituted at the suggestion of, or under the supervision and oversight of the nominee in the past year that has improved the system or its efficiency of operation
   - Demonstration of creative problem-solving skills and attitude
   - Outstanding efforts in system operations under difficult circumstances during the past year
   - Exceptional quality of customer service and/or response to emergencies in the system

4. May be nominated by any System Representative holding a supervisory/superior role to that of the nominee, or MRWA Staff.

ROOKIE WASTEWATER OPERATIONS SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

1. Must be currently employed as a wastewater treatment operations specialist or collection system operations specialist AND have been employed by that system for at least three (3) months and not more than two (2) years at the time of nomination.

2. Must hold a temporary Wastewater Operator’s license.

3. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   - Demonstrated eagerness to learn and expand knowledge of treatment process
   - Volume of new information absorbed by the nominee in the time employed
   - Exceptional effort on behalf of the system’s operations
   - Outstanding effort in system operations under difficult circumstances during the past year

4. May be nominated by any System Representative holding a supervisory/superior role to that of the nominee, or MRWA Staff.

COLLECTIONS OPERATIONS SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

1. Must be currently employed as a collection system operations specialist AND have been employed by that system for at least two (2) years at the time of nomination. If nominated from a system which combines treatment and collection functions, nominee must spend at least 60% of his/her work time in the collection systems functions and/or operations.

2. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   - Length of service and experience
   - Exceptional effort and dedication in performance of duties
   - Special project or program instituted at the suggestion of, or under the supervision and oversight of the nominee in the past year that has improved the system or its efficiency of operation
   - Demonstration of creative problem-solving skills and attitude
   - Outstanding efforts in system operations under difficult circumstances during the past year
   - Exceptional quality of customer service and/or response to emergencies in the system

3. May be nominated by any System Representative holding a supervisory/superior role to that of the nominee, or MRWA Staff.

WASTEWATER SYSTEM OF THE YEAR

1. Must be a community system of 25 or more population and at least 8 connections.

2. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   - Quality and consistency of treatment process and results
   - Quality and consistency of wastewater service to customers
   - A special new project, program or upgrade instituted within the past year
   - Demonstrated innovation or creativity in addressing a system function, problem or operation; Creative problem-solving attitude is prevalent
   - Exceptional effort by system personnel under difficult circumstances
   - Outstanding professionalism of system operations or management personnel

3. May be nominated by any System Representative in a supervisory/decision making capacity, MDE Representative(s) or MRWA Staff.
ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE YEAR

1. Nominees must not be directly employed by a water or wastewater system.
2. Must be a representative of an agency or organization not directly involved in the actual day-to-day operation or management of a water or wastewater system, OR, an individual with an affiliation related to water, wastewater or rural community interests.
3. Must have demonstrated a commitment to goals, programs, activities and services of Maryland Rural Water in some fashion, through either financial, program, legislative, regulatory or training support.
4. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   • Dedication to MRWA goals, programs and activities
   • Specific contribution(s) over the past year to MRWA activities or objectives
   • Publicly stated support for MRWA OR active promotion of MRWA and its goals and services
   • Outstanding assistance to MRWA in the past year
   • Outstanding performance in promotion, sponsoring, lobbying or influencing the passage (or failure) of legislation affecting rural water systems and/or in agreement with rural water goals and objectives
5. May be nominated by MRWA Staff and Board Members.

MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

1. Must be currently employed as a water and / or wastewater system maintenance specialist AND have been employed by that system for at least two (2) years at the time of nomination. A nomination can be submitted from a system which combines the duties of treatment and maintenance functions. The nominee must spend at least 60% of his/her work time in the maintenance functions and/or operations.
2. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   • Length of service and experience
   • Exceptional effort and dedication in performance of maintenance duties
   • Special maintenance project or program instituted at the suggestion of, or under the supervision and oversight of the nominee in the past year that has improved the system or its efficiency of operation
   • Demonstration of creative maintenance problem-solving skills and attitude
   • Outstanding efforts in system maintenance under difficult circumstances during the past year
3. May be nominated by any System Representative holding a supervisory/superior role to that of the nominee, or MRWA Staff.

TRAINER OF THE YEAR

1. Nominees must have taught not less than two (2) classes or eight (8) CEU hours for MRWA in the past 12 months.
2. Nominees must have volunteered their time to teach at no charge to MRWA for time or travel expenses.
3. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   • Number of classes taught over the previous two years greatly exceeds the minimum stated above
   • Exceptional professionalism in conducting the training
   • Rate as “9” or “10” on course evaluations consistently by a majority of class attendees
   • Traveled an excessive number of miles in the past two years to conduct training sessions without charge
   • Exceptional dedication and support demonstrated for MRWA goals, activities and programs
4. May be nominated by Operators/Superintendents who have attended training or by MRWA Staff.

DECISION MAKER OF THE YEAR

1. Eligible nominees include Mayors, Council members, Town Mangers, System Managers, Public Works Directors, or any category of office that carries the authority to make policy and budgetary decisions governing the operations of a water or wastewater system, whatever the title.
2. Must be currently employed by or associated with a system in a decision-making capacity, or have been so associated within three months of the time of award (i.e. within three months of the May Conference).
3. Examples of reasons for nomination include, but are not limited to:
   • Length of service and experience
   • Exceptional effort and dedication in performance of duties
   • Special project or program instituted at the suggestion of, or under the supervision and oversight of the nominee in the past year that has improved the system or its efficiency of operation
   • Demonstration of creative problem-solving skills and attitude
   • Outstanding efforts under difficult circumstances during the past year
4. May be nominated by any System Representative or MRWA Staff.

MARYLAND RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION / P.O. BOX 225 / WOODBINE, MD 21797 / PH: (410) 489-5877 / FAX: (410) 489-5840 / INFO@MD-RWA.ORG
The MRWA office MUST receive all nomination applications no later than 3:00 pm on Monday, March 30, 2020.

All nominations MUST BE ACCOMPANIED by a short narrative explanation of why the person, system or organization is thought to be deserving of the award.

Nomination applications can be returned to MRWA by email, fax or regular mail.