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DECEMBER 2012 • NUMBER 124

# OPERATORS Digest



Nominations
Deadline for the
EOCP Operator of
the Year Award
is March 31, 2013

# First Annual EOCP Operator of the Year Award

he EOCP has participated in an Operator of the Year recognition award for many years but has never had its own award. As the EOCP moves closer to a Professional Operator designation, it was decided to create such an award that recognizes a true leader among the certified Operators. The 2012 EOCP Operator of the Year Award is the first such award from EOCP that recognizes an individual Operator as the epitome of what it means to be an Operator.

For years it has been recognized that there are a few Operators in BC and Yukon who go above and beyond doing a good job; they provide an example for others of the many facets of being an Operator, particularly in supporting the activities of other Operators. They take extra training, they make the extra effort to support their fellow Operators, and teach others what they have learned through many years of working in the field. Often they encourage others to become more involved including attending training opportunities and pushed certification long before it was mandatory. They go out of their way to help everyone in the water and wastewater field, often at the expense of their own advancement or what would otherwise be their own personal time. They volunteer to help others, they make presentations, they serve on committees,



June Williams accepting award from EOCP President Mike Gosselin.

all while doing the things that are necessary to be considered "good at their job."

The first EOCP Operator of the Year Award was presented to June Williams. June has been a tireless worker going above and beyond just doing a great job of operating her facilities and encouraging the growth of the Operators who work for her, other Operators in her area, participating in the first, First Nations Training Program at Thompson Rivers University, preparing a training course for the College of New Caledonia, and organizing a Water Awareness workshop for Tachet and the surrounding areas.



# **Environmental Operators Certification Program**

The BC Operators Digest is the official newsletter of the Environmental Operators Certification Program. Submissions for publication in the Digest are welcome. Please email the editor Brian Thorburn at **bthorburn@epcor.com**. Changes of address, annual dues, Continuing Education Requirements, exam applications, as well as general inquiries about the program should be addressed to:

### **ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATORS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

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The Environmental Operators Certification Program is a charter member of the Association of Boards of Certification and is a registered society with more than 3,700 active members.

### **Digest Advertising Opportunities**

Business card-sized ads are available for \$75 per issue or \$250 for four issues, plus HST. For ads of other sizes, please contact the EOCP office.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 41498030 Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to Environmental Operators Certification Program 201 – 3833 Henning Drive Burnaby, BC V5C 6N5

### **EOCP Elections**

The EOCP Board elections occurred over the summer months. Two positions on the Board were elected by acclamation while six Operators ran for three director positions. Directors elected by acclamation were:

Educational Representative: Eric Jackson

Employer Representative: Bob Smith

The following were the results of the EOCP election:

Pat Miller 119 Votes
Chris Brown 85 Votes
Darryl Bjorgaard 80 Votes
Ron Bernier 77 Votes
John McLuskie 62 Votes
Jim McQuarrie 56 Votes

The elected Operators for 2012–2014 are **Pat Miller**, **Chris Brown**, and **Darryl Bjorgaard**.

### 2012 Board of Directors

Mike Gosselin President
Pat Miller Vice President
Brian Thorburn Treasurer
Chris Brown Secretary

Directors

Darryl Bjorgaard Shawn Sanders Eric Jackson Bob L. Smith Tim Lambert

# STEVE BENOIT EOCP Board Director 2008 to 2012

The EOCP would like to thank Steve Benoit from Thompson Rivers University for all his hard work



over the years. Steve was instrumental in the launching of the TRU Water Treatment Program and was an invaluable asset to the EOCP Board.

### EDITORIAL

The Availability of
Training and
Apprenticeships
for Water and
Wastewater
Operators in BC



here is a belief in the water and wastewater industry that the sky is falling and there will not be enough certified and experienced Operators to fill all the upcoming vacancies in the near future. As the baby boomers begin to retire after many years of satisfying employment as Operators, there is going to be a demand for certified Operators. Make no mistake about it, there are going to be numerous openings in the future for new Operators as many experienced Operators retire. Do we put our head in the sand, turn out the lights and call it a day, or do we look at the future and plan ahead to meet it head on and come out on top of this battle?

Do we lessen the certification requirements and lower the bar to allow Operators to achieve higher levels of certification without the necessary experience and education that is currently required in order to have the "proper" certification level of Operator? Would we give a driver's license to new drivers for taking a 10 week theoretical course without any driving experience? This is an exaggeration but a happy medium must be achieved to balance the need for certified Operators at the appropriate levels and a well run water and/or wastewater system.

Investing in the future of new Operators or investing in the future of seasoned Operators are the two options that I feel cover all the necessary bases in the certification process. I will outline a few different scenarios that are occurring internationally and provincially to show the different options available for Operators and for new Operators today.

A colleague of mine who moved up the ranks from an Operator to manager was telling me about his predicament in his large utility. The Utility hires new Operators and gives them three years to achieve their Level II certification. They

are supported with training opportunities over their first three years of employment but they also should take some initiative of their own. Many of these Operators are unable to pass their certification exams after 3 years of experience due at least in

part to not taking the training seriously and consequently, lose their jobs after their three years of employment. This is a loss of employment for Operators with three years of experience in some cases simply because they might be short on math skills or not have understood one important aspect of operation. Is this an extreme case, yes but with better involvement in the training opportunities at the utility, the retention of the Operators would increase and the revolving door scenario might lessen.

Many experienced Operators complain about their lack of CEU's and their inability to take the Level III and Level IV exams because of this. There are numerous training courses available from face to face training offered by many training organizations in the province to online and correspondence courses offered by TRU, AWWA, WEF, CEU Plan, and California State University. These courses can be very economical but if the utility is not supporting their Operators in regards to training and professional development or the Operators do not take it seriously then we as an industry are fighting a losing battle. Utilities must begin to plan for the future and begin investing in their Operators. Utilities should have adequate training budgets for Operator courses along with safety courses for their Operators and if Operators want to take courses after hours, there shouldn't even be a discussion as long as the course can benefit the utility. Some utilities will send their Operators away for longer periods of training or are developing their own in house training to benefit their current Operators and to also reduce training costs in the future. Another option for experienced Operators is to develop and deliver courses.

If anyone told me ten years ago that I would be developing and delivering water and wastewater courses I would have called them crazy. However, by developing one-day workshops for Operators, I am able to get double the CEU's for the course for the first time I deliver it and able to make a couple of extra bucks. Operators, check out the Training Registry, it really isn't that painful.

There is discussion among some stakeholders in the province that there is a need for an apprentice type program for new Operators and to promote a career path for certified Operators. First off, there are already apprentice type programs available for new Operators in BC and Yukon. Thompson Rivers University (TRU) and Okanagan College (OC) both offer two (2) year programs in water and wastewater which are very similar to apprentice programs. TRU is also offering a one-year program. The students taking the courses are able to get work term experiences of actually working on the job as part of their program and they are also taking valuable training pertinent to the industry. When I first took the OC program there were not many jobs available to the graduates but these days, there are not enough graduates available for the jobs that are out there. This is a large commitment of time and resources for students but the career of an Operator is a rewarding one of which the possibilities are endless. Every time I speak to high school students, I tell them about these two great programs and the job opportunities available in the future. There is some discussion about more training or apprentice type programs being developed provincially and nationally. Any program that makes a better Operator or gets more people involved in becoming an Operator should be welcomed with open arms.

Once the Operator is treated and viewed as a Professional, there should be a greater desire for entry into this rewarding field. The Association of Boards of Certification is currently working on a designation for Professional Operators which should be available sometime in 2013 for all certified Operators who qualify.

# MTS Maintenance Training

s there has been a shortage of System profiles submitted to the editor for print in the EOCP newsletter, I have decided to start putting training facility profiles in the newsletter to show all the Operators in BC and Yukon, the excellent training facilities offered to Operators and the hands-on training available. We will be highlighting the various hands-on training facilities such as MTS, Thompson Rivers University, Okanagan College, and Yukon College. If any Operators know of any such other excellent training facilities, please contact me so that I can include it in a future newsletter.

The first in our series of training

facility profiles is MTS Maintenance Training Systems Inc, in Vernon, BC.

MTS Maintenance Training Systems Inc. is an energetic and resourceful company providing Personnel Development & Consulting Services to the Municipal Utility Industry. MTS has been a registered company since 1994 and incorporated since 2001, they have been providing utility Operator training for the past 15 years and have developed/delivered hundreds of general and client specific training programs.

Serving the industry's need for relevent, timely, and practical training, MTS provides a platform for a more "hands on" approach to Operator training opportunities. Their "Interactive Training" facility in Vernon is almost four years old and includes a water treatment plant; disinfection room; water distribution; SCADA and



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MTS Training Facility



# Systems Inc.

wastewater collection system. These live components provide the platform for MTS and their training partners to deliver a new level of interactive and traditional training opportunities to water and wastewater professionals.

To meet the growing demand for relevant training as well as CEU acquisition, the MTS facility provides the foundation for a wide range of hands-on interactive and classroom style training. Certification courses include Water Distribution & Treatment Levels I to IV and Wastewater Collection & Treatment Levels I to IV as well as SWS and SWWS. Additionally, they offer over 25 hands-on skill development training that have been accredited by the EOCP for CEU's; highlights include courses such as:

- Leak detection
- Fire hydrant maintenance and troubleshooting
- Control valve maintenance and troubleshooting
- Backflow assembly testing; troubleshooting; repairs
- Water main break repairs
- Confined space rescue (operations level)
- Hypochlorination
- Jar testing
- Water system orientation for sales people
- Reservoir cleaning and maintenance
- Additional programs are being developed continuously, please let them know if there is training you need and can't find, they can likely put it together for you.

Their website hosts a profile system for Operators providing a platform for tracking career path development and planning; if you receive their monthly updates you already have a profile, if not, register for one today www.mtsinc.ca or contact the office (250) 503-0893.



**Control Valve Troubleshooting** 

Fire Hydrant Maintenance



Hypochlorination



**Backflow Assembly and Repair Training** 



**Leak Detection** 



# ASTTBC Recognizes EOCP Certified Operator

Dawn and her mother with John Leech, ASCT, ASTTBC Executive Director, Norm Leech, Executive Director, First Nations Technology Council, and Bill MacPherson, ASCT, ASTTBC President.



Dawn Magrath, SWS, SWWS-L, ROWP, was awarded the ASTTBC Professional Achievement Award at the organization's 24th annual Technology Awards and Recognition Celebration in Vancouver November 3.

"This award recognizes ASTTBC members who distinguish themselves in their field of technology or have made a substantial contribution to the well-being of the community," "Dawn earned her Professional Achievement Award for 20 years and counting, of dedicated service to central and northern BC communities."

Dawn started out in a dump truck constructing a lagoon for her First Nation, and became a Technology Professional to work in fast paced work environments, and the outdoors. She earned a TRU diploma in Engineering Drafting and Design Technology, and

qualified as an Onsite Wastewater Practitioner as well as an SWS and SWWS-L certified Operator. Dawn is now reading for a Master's in International Construction Management through the University of Bath and BCIT.

Currently a Senior Construction Manager with the Skeetchestn Indian Band, Dawn has operated heavy equipment, surveyed and laid out projects, estimated, planned wastewater systems, and worked with the Provincial Emergency Program. She has done civil projects with Breakout Contracting, and as an Assistant Area Manager for the BC Transportation Ministry.

Dawn takes pride in contributing her knowledge and skills to First Nations communities in the BC Interior, and looks forward to developing and mentoring developing technology careers for others.



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# Operators! Help make the Top Ops even better!

Submit your questions for the next Top Ops. It can cover wastewater treatment and collection or water treatment and distribution. Just submit with questions that either have a true or false answer or a fill in the blank type question. Please send your questions to **Shawn Sanders** at **shawn@mtsinc.ca** 



Top Ops Competitors hard at work in Penticton. Congratulations to the winners from Capital Regional District, Steve Whipps, Jim Smart, and Gordie Bridges.

# Alberta Environment and Water Suspends Operator's Certification

SUBMITTED BY:

Kathy Ambramowski,

Drinking Water and

Wastewater Certification

Program Lead

Iberta Environment and Water, as directed by the Water and Wastewater **Operator Certification Advisory Committee** (CAC), recently suspended an operator's Certificate of Qualification for a period of one year. The operator in question was found outside a certification exam session questioning operators on the exam as they exited. The operator was not an exam participant and when confronted by government staff refused

to provide any information as to the reason for being in attendance. The operator was asked to leave immediately. Alberta Environment and Water took this as a very serious incident and contacted the Environmental Law section of the Government of Alberta for guidance. Alberta Environment and Water lawyers referred the matter to the CAC with a recommendation to suspend the Certificate of Qualification, at a length of time to be determined by the CAC.

As a result of this incident, Alberta Environment and Water with approval from the Environmental Law section has developed an Exam

Code of Conduct (ECOC) that all operators are required to sign prior to writing certification exams. If an operator refuses to sign, they are not permitted to write. The ECOC was used for the first time at the March 2012 exam sessions.

Another incident arose recently when an operator submitted an "altered" course completion certificate as part of their renewal application. When certification staff inquired about the date of the completion, the operator was forced to submit a copy of the certificate that included the date. The operator in question was warned that falsifying documents was in fact "uttering a forged document," which is a criminal offence. The operator was let off with a warning, but this should act as a reminder that all information submitted to the Department on applications for certification, applications for renewal, daily, monthly, or yearly reports, may lead to disciplinary actions including the revoking or suspending of a Certificate of Qualification, non-renewal of a certificate, and possible fines up to \$50,000. This applies not only to the operator, but to any supervisor who knowingly verifies the information.

### EOCP AGM RE-CAP

The Annual General Meeting of the EOCP was held this year in Parksville at the Coastal Water Suppliers Association Fall Workshop, A turnout of 29 Operators showed up for the meeting. The year in review, the financial report, and a question and answer period occurred along with the presentation of the new EOCP Operator of the Year Award.

> **EOCP Treasurer Brian Thorburn** presenting the Annual Financial

Report at AGM.

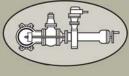
**EOCP** Operators listening to the presentations at the EOCP AGM.



# The Training Registry

Operators, are we sounding like a broken record yet? The Training Registry is live, get involved and find out how you can help yourself and your fellow Operators. Just follow the easy steps online at www.eocp.org and click on the Training Registry tab to find out more information on it or call the office or a Board member for more information.





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# 2013 BCWWA Awards: Call for Nominations

# Deadline: December 21st

Do you know an Operator showcasing excellence and innovation in the water and wastewater industry? BCWWA is now seeking 2013 nominations the Victor M. Terry Award for Excellence in the Water and Waste Community. The Victor M. Terry Award recognizes an Operator for advancing excellence in the water and waste community through ingenuity and proficiency in plant operations and/or maintenance.

The deadline for 2013 awards nominations is December 21, 2012.

### **Submit a nomination**

BCWWA is also seeking nominations for a variety of other award categories, including:

- For advancing excellence in the water and waste community (Individual and Group)
- For service, leadership, and contributions to BCWWA (Individual and Group)

Nominations are welcome from both members and non-members. **Nomination and selection criteria** can be found on the award nomination forms at: www.bcwwa.org/membership/awards.html.

# Keeping your Certification Valid

Some Operators have not been keeping their certification valid; either by not paying their annual dues or by not fulfilling the Continuing Education Requirement (or both!). Your facility requires a certain level of certified Operator and if you are the one and have let your certification lapse, you or your utility could be in violation of your Permit to Operate. Please contact us so we may help you get back into "Good Standing" as soon as possible.

Operators hard at work during an exam session in Chilliwack



## **EOCP Exams**

The EOCP exam schedule for 2013 will be ready soon. You can check it out on the EOCP website at <a href="http://www.eocpsearch.org/ExamSessions.php">http://www.eocpsearch.org/ExamSessions.php</a> We may be able to put a session on near you, contact the EOCP office for details.

### **ABC Cross Connection Control**

Operators, did you know that the Association of Boards of Certification has a certification exam for Cross Connection Control? If anyone would like to apply to write this examination and become an ABC certified CCC Operator, contact ABC at:

Association of Boards of Certification

2805 SW Snyder Bld, Suite 535, Ankeny, IA 50023 Phone: 515-232-3623 • Fax: 515 965-6827 Email: abc@abccert.org • Web: www.abccert.org

# SAFETY CORNER

### Minor Water Leak Incident

Excavations around water leaks: A backhoe was excavating near a minor water leak that hadn't been pin-pointed yet. In order to find where the leak was, the water line was still pressurized with the Operator and a gas line locator standing above the trench. As the bucket uncovered the leak, rocks and boulders began blasting out of the trench nearly taking out the gas line locator who was standing in the direct line of fire. As he was laughing about how close that was along with the backhoe operator, the Operator in charge

yelled at the backhoe Operator to get his bucket in front of the stream of water coming from the ditch. Rocks and dirt ended up spraying a BMW and the front side of a waterfront home before the bucket was put in place. Prior to starting any excavation, ensure that a tailgate talk occurs along with any hazards identified prior to starting to dig. This could have minimized any collateral damage if the backhoe operator had explicit instructions to put his bucket in the way of any stream of water leaving the ditch.



# **Operator Pictures or Videos!**

Do you have a picture worth printing? Send it in to the editor at **bthorburn@epcor.com** along with a little explanation and we will publish it in the next newsletter.

What do you get when you have a leak at a saddle that is in a high pressure zone?

### **Operator Tools**

Operators, send me pictures of your handmade or manufactured tools to share with your fellow Operators!

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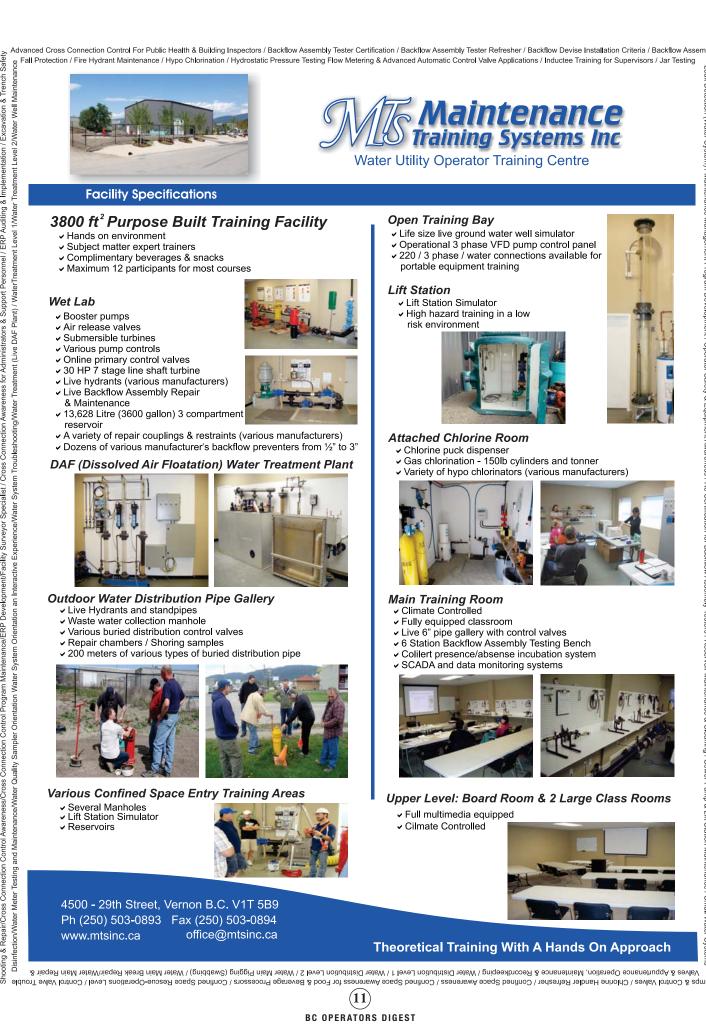






# Electronic EOCP Newsletter

Operators, if you are reading this newsletter in hard copy and would prefer to do your part to reduce your carbon footprint by receiving an electronic copy, please contact the office at eocp@eocp.org to ensure that we have your correct email and contact information.





























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### **NEW OPERATORS AND OPERATOR UPGRADES!**

Check out the newest and latest upgrades on Operator status. Go to the EOCP website and click on the Operator **Highlights Tab** and then Click on **New Operators** for an up to date list.

OPERATOR CERTIFICATION TO OCTOBER 18, 2012 C-2012 TO PRESENT								
Classification	IV	Ш	H .	MUII	1	MUI	OIT	Total
WD	47	161	770	4	890	9	67	1948
WT	26	47	151	2	194	5	39	464
WWC	4	40	387	5	647	5	32	1120
MWWT	85	121	244	4	291	6	55	806
IWWT		4	13		19			36
BWD								32
SWS								928
swws						L 131	M 141	272
СН								530
Total								6136



2012 Training Schedule online at www.jamesonwater.com 250.882.0796

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