

Racine Wastewater Utility Hosts Southeast meeting May 8th at Roma Lodge

The Spring SE District meeting was held May 8th at Roma Lodge in Racine. It was hosted by the Racine Wastewater Utility and Racine Danish Kringle was served during registration! The City of Racine Administrator, Jim Palenick, welcomed the guests on behalf of the City of Racine, Mayor Cory Mason, Mary Frances Klimek and 15 City Alderman. Administrator Palenick said our meeting is a great way to network with colleagues and offers ways to learn more about our profession. He welcomed us to watch Foxconn over the next several years and the new infrastructure, new technology, the water utility and WWTP for Foxconn.

Jonathan Biagiotti, Product Consumer Development Manager from Predictive Maintenance Sensor, opened the technical sessions and provided information on ways to detect problems on machines. Sensors are placed on machines such as an air handling unit, cooling tower, chiller or motor. These sensors record the vibration of the machine and the data is sent to a Cloud. The technician from Predictive Maintenance Sensor can review the information and contact the WWTP to tell them the severity of the problem. They can also perform early stage diagnostic problems for the machine. Jonathan said there will be a live demonstration of this maintenance sensor this afternoon at the Racine WWTP.

The second speaker was Garret Kaminskis, President/CEO, from North American Safety Systems. He spoke about safety at wastewater treatment utilities. He discussed confined space permit status and alternate procedures, how to control confined space hazards and when one would reclassify a space to non-permit status. Great news for WWTP. He said they are the only industry that manages confined space well and knows what spaces to permit. He also discussed air monitoring techniques and strategies. Test the air space every 4 feet up, down and all around. Pause at each position to get a reading.

A break between the sessions offered the attendees time to visit with the vendors and network with fellow professionals.

The next session was presented by Autumn Farrell, Audit Chemist with the Certification Services External Services for the WDNR. She discussed how the EPA has changed the LOD procedure. The effective date of new LOD procedure happened on Sept. 27, 2017. The EPA is revising the procedure because the procedure for calculating a LOD, (EPA calls it the MDL), has always been recognized as flawed. The bottom line is that it is only based on precision. And with the LOD formula, the better the precision, the LOWER the LOD. To correct this, the DNR has created a spreadsheet to use to assist you to calculate the LOD. The DNR will post this spreadsheet on their website in the near future. To use the spreadsheet, you will enter your information in the green cells only, and the spreadsheet will calculate the rest of the numbers for you. If any red alert warning defaults are shown, edit the green sheeted cells accordingly and the corrections will be made.

Business Meeting:

Nate Tillis, City of Waukesha, Chair of the SE District, called the meeting to order. The DNR update was presented by Geisa Thielen, Wastewater Engineer with the WDNR, SE District. She discussed performing the Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET) Test and completing the Report Form. Once it's completed and you have the WET Test Summary from the lab, send it to Kari Flemming, the Biomonitoring Coordinator with the WDNR to review. Her email is kari.flemming@wisconsin.gov and cc: Geisa Thielen at geisa.thielen@wisconsin.gov.

A new program the SE District is currently establishing is a tuition aid program to assist a full-time student currently enrolled in school. The membership discussed this topic and had no objections at the meeting. The SE Officers will keep the members informed of their progress.

After lunch, Nate Tillis gave a big thank you to the City of Racine and Vendors for providing prizes for the raffle.

The next session was from Keith Haas, PE, General Manager of the City of Racine Water and Wastewater. He talked about relationships and how do we relate with other professionals, family members, friends, etc. He said we are in various types of relationships and some are more important than others. Be a mentor. Meet 5 new people at a conference. The more relationships you have, the better your survival. How wide does your network spread? Do the Golden Rule – Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Keith Haas also said that the Foxconn switch is On! There are many professionals involved: Lawyers, Engineers, Consultants, City and Government personnel, Contractors, Businesses and the Residents of the various surrounding cities.

The last session of the day was a presentation on Air Permitting at Wastewater Utilities by Tom Henning, PE from SEH. Air permits are driven Nationally by ambient air quality standards. Air permits are defined by how many emissions you have. The biggest pollutant at a WWTP is methane gas. Additional pollutants include sulfur dioxide, formaldehyde and hydrogen sulfide. If you are buying a new engine, ensure the engine is EPA Emission Certified or is a NSPS engine.

The RICE Rule was discussed. Also, operating permits are due March 1st of each year. Tom finalized his presentation discussing that the EPA is designating new ozone nonattainment areas. Watch for stricter emission limits and permitting requirements.

The meeting was adjourned, and the day ended with a plant tour of the Racine Wastewater Treatment Plant. A big thank you to Racine for hosting the day!

Submitted by Mary Ellen Mortensen, SE District Secretary