Florida Proud to Host AWWA/WEF Young Professionals Summit and Utility Management Conference

This year’s AWWA/WEF Young Professionals (YP) Summit and Utility Management Conference were held in Tampa on February 6-10 and attracted a record-setting 1,073 participants. The great success of these events is due in large part to the many FSAWWA volunteers, including members of the Young Professionals (YP) Committee, who worked hard as the Local Host Committee to plan and implement event logistics and activities.

Young Professionals Committee

AWWA’s YP Committee plans activities and events to actively promote the advancement of students and younger professionals in the water industry. This committee leads the local sections, including FSAWWA, to engage younger members to take an active role in the Association. By participating in the Association’s and/or the Florida Section’s YP Committee, members can create a professional network, enhance their resumes, and become industry leaders.

Young Professionals Summit

The AWWA/WEF YP Summit is a workshop that focuses on the professional development of new entrants into the water and wastewater industry. This year, 164 AWWA and WEF members joined us in Tampa. The summit featured a panel on “Leadership in Water and Wastewater Emergency Management,” with panelists Christine Owen (Tampa Bay Water), Jonathan Reeves (DC Water), and Scott Holowasko (Gainesville Regional Utilities). Each spoke about their specific emergency management experiences in the water and wastewater industry and lessons they learned. An engaging audience question-and-answer session followed, and the panel concluded with group scenario discussions about interacting with participating agencies during an emergency situation.

The afternoon session focused on interactive professional development that provided participants with skills to improve workplace communication. Linda Kelly of WEF led the discussion on improving emotional intelligence, and Bill Stowe of Des Moines Water Works shared his experience as he addressed cyanobacteria and cyanotoxins in Des Moines raw water sources caused by phosphorus loading from farm fertilizer runoff. Both AWWA and WEF held training sessions to equip YPs with new ideas, plans, and materials that can increase YP participation in their local sections. Two networking receptions were held on Monday and Tuesday evenings and were very well attended.

Jordan Walker, FSAWWA’s YP Committee chair, led the FSAWWA volunteers as Local Host Committee chair, with assistance from Tyler Smith as co-chair. Volunteer activities included marketing, sponsorship, reception...
events, reception packet, and a post-summit event. According to AWWA, the support provided by Jordan and his team made a huge positive impact on the summit. The Association thanks Jordan and the following FSAWWA volunteers for the high-quality services they provided:

- Jordan Walker, Kimley-Horn
- Tyler Smith, Carollo Engineers
- Catherine Kiever, ADS Inc.
- David Yonge, Jones-Edmunds
- Hillary Weber, Hillsborough County
- Jose Cueto, Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Dept.
- Katherine Williams, Hazen and Sawyer
- Kristen Waksman, Carollo Engineers
- Kunal Nayee, Atkins
- Lizeth Mora, King Engineering
- Mike Semago, Kimley-Horn
- Nelson Perez-Jacome, Hazen and Sawyer
- Nicole Smith, McKim & Creed
- Paul Biscardi, Hazen and Sawyer
- Phil Walker, Tetra Tech
- Rachel Fogarty, RC Associates
- Sean Menard, Jones-Edmunds
- Sharmeela Khemlani, King Engineering
- Shelby Hughes, Kimley-Horn
- Tyler Tedcastle, Carter & Verplanck

We thank these volunteers for their help in making this year’s YP Summit a success.

AWWA/WEF Utility Management Conference

This is the 28th year of the AWWA/WEF Utility Management Conference, and it has earned a stellar reputation as one of the most informative of management conferences. The conference facilitates AWWA’s mission to advance and disseminate knowledge to improve water utility management and leadership practices. A record-setting 959 people attended the four-day program. Topics addressed included succession planning, asset management, effective business practices, customer communication, fostering innovation, rate making from a conservation perspective, infrastructure project management, cybersecurity, climate change, and utility benchmarking.

Pamela London-Exner, the FSAWWA Technical and Education Council (TEC) chair, led the FSAWWA volunteers as the Local Host Committee chair. Association members and staff extended “many, many thanks to Pam; she was an amazing support, both in the planning phase and during the conference, by coordinating the room monitors, helping with registration, and being available at any moment to offer assistance.”

The AWWA members from Florida who provided volunteer services as room monitors were:

- Bina Nayak, Pinellas County Utilities
- Richard Anderson, Peace River Manasota Regional Water Authority
- Dave Bracciano, Tampa Bay Water
- Nichole Reeves Thomas, Tampa Bay Water

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We thank these FSAWWA volunteers for their dedicated service that resulted in a very successful Utility Management Conference.

If you are interested in volunteering or in learning more about the FSAWWA YP Committee and/or the Technical and Education Council, please contact our executive director, Peggy Guingona; our YP chair, Jordan Walker; or our TEC chair, Pamela London-Exner, using the contact information provided at www.fsawwa.org.

Utility management professionals from across the United States attend the Utility Management Conference opening general session.