

Water and Natural Resources Committee  
New Mexico Highlands Student Union Bldg.  
Las Vegas, NM  
August 1, 2017

**New Mexico Rural Water Association**

**Challenges in Public Water & Wastewater  
Systems in Rural New Mexico**

A public water system is any system that provides water for human consumption to at least 15 service connections or serves an average of at least 25 people for at least 60 days per year.

- Municipalities
  - MDWCAs
  - Coops
  - Homeowner Assns
  - Private
  - National & State Parks
  - Truck stops
  - RV Parks
- and approximately 24 other ways to form a PWS

There are 1,095 public water systems in New Mexico

Over 85% of the public water systems in New Mexico serve populations of 500 or less

All water & wastewater systems have challenges. These challenges are often compounded for small rural systems.

One very important challenge is maintaining certified/qualified/experienced Operator(s)

Water and Wastewater Operators are the backbone of successful utilities

Operator's number one priority is to provide safe clean drinking water so as to protect public health

# Aging Infrastructure

Aging Infrastructure, and managing related capital costs are challenges for systems of all sizes. Small rural systems, who make up a vast majority of New Mexico's water and wastewater utilities, often lack the necessary funding to meet their infrastructure replacement needs.

# Aging Infrastructure

- Old distribution systems
- Non-working or lack of isolation valves
- Source deficiencies
- Storage deficiencies
- Water loss/accountability

# Compliance Requirements

Changing regulations are a constant in the water/wastewater industry.

Changes in Maximum Contaminate Levels

Revised Total Coliform Rule

Disinfection By-products

Consumer Confidence Rule

# Training and Technology

Training

Cost

Location

Technology

Computer skills

New products bring technical challenges

# Sustainability – preparing for now and the future

Maintaining adequate cash flow to cover:

Day to day operations

- Salaries
- Parts
- Equipment
- Chemicals/disinfectant
- Sampling
- Etc...

# Sustainability – preparing for now and the future

Maintaining adequate reserves to cover:

## Emergencies

- Line Breaks
- Pump and Motor Failure
- Outages
- Compliance issues

# Sustainability – preparing for now and the future

Maintaining adequate cash flow and reserves to cover:

## Future

- System upgrades
- Equipment purchase/replacement
- System maintenance to sustain and/or extend life of all water and wastewater system inventories

Small rural systems don't always have access to the same resources as large systems. Overall, these systems do a remarkable job of utilizing the resources they do have to provide good, clean, safe drinking water to their communities.