



As I enter the final three months of my term as president of NYWEA, it is a time for reflection and introspection. First, where has the time gone? Did someone leave my life in the fast forward mode? As presidents before me have stated, it goes by quickly, and indeed it has! Regardless, it has not only been a fast year but also a very good year with many great accomplishments. I feel that my message would not be complete without summarizing at least the major happenings and accomplishments. As you

review my list, remember that these are not my accomplishments but rather the accomplishments of the New York Water Environment Association—an association of people with purpose, passion, and principle. I take no personal credit for these accomplishments, but rather, I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of our tremendously talented volunteers and staff who came together to make so many great things happen.

Business Plan

The state association's Executive Committee and Board of Directors has developed and is in the process of implementing the top four initiatives of the strategic plan. The business plan is where we take these top initiatives and "put the rubber on the highway," as I like to say. Briefly, the top four are

1. Membership expansion
2. Certification programs
3. Training programs
4. Name recognition through humanitarian assistance

Membership Assistant Position

The duties of this is a part-time position are to enhance membership efforts by following up with members who have been inactive in the association, welcoming new members, and doing other tasks as time allows.

Continuing Professional Education

The program requiring continuing education for professional engineers was launched in 2004 and presented a dilemma for NYWEA. NYWEA members rose to the task and, through the efforts of our volunteers and staff, were able to become "approved sponsors" under the New York State Education Department. We can now review and provide professional development hours for our professional engineer members. This was no small undertaking, but we recognized the benefit to our members.

Confined Space Training

The Operator Training Task Force was able to pull together what we hope was the first in a series of training events to come. Three successful confined space awareness seminars were held across the state in Batavia, Little Falls, and Fishkill. Plans are being made at the present time for events for 2005 and beyond. A long-term goal is to develop a five-year training plan, similar to what the Department of Environmental Conservation Facilities Operations and Assistance Section does.

Humanitarian Assistance Task Force

The state association has created a Humanitarian Assistance Task Force, chaired by past president and current Water Environment Federation director Adam Zabinski. This task force is looking into a variety of organizations, developing criteria for selection, and developing various funding ideas for both money and time donations.

Collections System Certification Program

This program was initiated in 2003 and came to fruition during 2004. Tests have been given, and certificates have been issued. This program provides a mechanism for collections people to elevate themselves by working towards a higher mastery of their profession. This could lead to membership from a previously uninvolved portion of our profession.

Joint Membership Directory with New York Section AWWA

This has been a large undertaking, and members should have received the CD-ROM directory in late November. This is a benefit to the members of both associations.

Elected Official Training

NYWEA, in conjunction with the Environmental Finance Center at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Rural Water Association, coordinated three very successful evening programs to educate elected officials on the importance of wastewater issues. These events were held in Chenango, Dunkirk, and Potsdam.

Our theme for this issue of *Clearwaters* is infrastructure needs/funding. But the real problem is that our infrastructure needs are in need of funding. All of us in the field recognize the need to update equipment, install new facilities, work to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) and combined sewer overflows (CSOs), etc., but we are all plagued by lack of funding. Sure, loans are available, but who doesn't already have more loans than they want and higher taxes as a result? What we really need is the rebirth of the Construction Grants Program—one that would be able to grant 75 percent of a project's cost. Then we'd be able to fix inflow and infiltration (I&I) issues in sewers, eliminate many SSO and CSO issues, and not have to build larger treatment plants to handle the higher flows generated by aging and aged collection systems. I'm sure that you'll find this issue of *Clearwaters* to be both informative and entertaining.

On a final note, this message is my last as president. I can say that this has been a great year for NYWEA, a year that has seen us move forward in many areas. I have done my best to do what was needed, when it was needed and where it was needed. I thank the New York Water Environment Association Board of Directors as well as my fellow officers for their faith in me to captain the association ship this past year. I have enjoyed it all—even the loooong drives! How would I summarize my feelings of my presidential term? When asked to reflect on his life during the final stages of his battle with cancer, George Sheehan, the "runner's philosopher" stated simply, "Have I done well enough?" Have I? You be the judge. He, too, was a person of purpose, passion, and principle, just like all of you—like me—like all of us. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Sheehan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.