SWMOA to Offer Training and Resources for Membrane Operators in the Southwest

Southern California Salinity Coalition (SCSC) is pleased to announce its support of the Southwest Membrane Operator Association (SWMOA), a new and unique organization devoted to training and certifying membrane plant operators in Southern California, Nevada, and Arizona.

Based in Southern California, SWMOA plans to offer workshops, hands-on training, and other valuable resources to its member agencies, including Continuing Education Credits (CEUs), with the ultimate goal of making the membrane industry stronger and the technology more reliable in the southwestern United States.

Some of the participating agencies include the Orange County Water District, Irvine Ranch Water District, West Basin Municipal Water District, Boyle Engineering, Sweetwater Authority, Eastern Municipal Water District, and NWRI. It is also an affiliate of the American Membrane Technology Association.

Why Is Membrane Operator Training Important?

In the water and wastewater industries, membranes are used to remove contaminants, like salts, metals, and viruses, from water. The number of membrane-based treatment plants is growing rapidly in the southwest. It is a technology that, according to SWMOA President, Mehul Patel, P.E., “lends itself to reclamation and conservation efforts. It is also one of the few technologies than can meet the highest water quality standards.”

However, little means exist to educate, train, and support membrane plant operators.

“There are a lot of certificate programs available to become an operator,” said Patel, who is also a Principal Engineer with the Orange County Water District, “but none of those programs provide training specific to membrane plants. Normally, utilities have to train the operators themselves.”

Several national membrane operator training programs are available, added Patel, “but it’s important we have training at the local and regional level. We have issues that are unique to the southwest — the high cost of energy, stricter regulations, and

National Salinity Summit Set for San Diego in January 2007

The Southern California Salinity Coalition (SCSC) is co-sponsoring the Multi-State Salinity Coalition’s Fifth Annual National Salinity Management and Desalination Summit, which will be held January 11-12, 2007, at the Catamaran Resort Hotel in San Diego, California.

The Summit will focus on the development and implementation of breakthrough policies and approaches associated with salinity and desalination. Sessions include:

- Future and impending federal legislation regarding desalination and salinity management.
- Balancing desalination and the needs of the environmental community.
- Applied research.

- Innovative regulation implementation.
- Brackish water and ocean water desalination.
- Recycled water desalination.
- Project implementation.

A tour to the Carlsbad Seawater Desalination Plant and Hydranautics Membrane Plant is included.

For further information or to register for the Summit, please visit www.multi-statesalinitycoalition.com.
Southern California Salinity Coalition

Visit SCSC’s Website for Latest Salinity News

SCSC has launched a new website for the purpose of communicating salinity issues to water and wastewater agencies, regulators, and the general public.

By visiting www.SoCalSalinity.org, users can access information ranging from:
- Basic facts about salts and removal technologies.
- SCSC’s latest research and newsletters.
- Upcoming events, including Board meetings.
- Fellowship opportunities.
- Links to other salinity organizations.

There is also a 5-minute introductory video to SCSC and salinity problems in Southern California on SCSC’s home page. Visit us soon!

Reminder:

SCSC Graduate Fellowship Deadline is March 1st

SCSC is now accepting applications for its $10,000 a year graduate fellowship. The deadline for applications is March 1, 2007.

SCSC awards fellowships to support master’s or doctoral graduate research addressing the critical need to remove or reduce salts from water supplies and to preserve water resources in Southern California.

Examples of the Coalition’s specific research interests include (but are not limited to):
- Concentrate management
- Institutional and regulatory issues
- Economics of reducing salinity levels
- Innovative treatment technologies
- Regional and watershed planning solutions
- Public education and awareness

This Fellowship is limited to graduate students attending universities or colleges in Southern California. Please visit www.socalsalinity.org/fellowship for more details.

Peer-Run Membrane Training Available for Operators

Continued from SWMOA Training on reverse side

an increased amount of reuse, for instance — which we need to consider and address.”

At present, SWMOA is the only organization in the southwest — in the entire western United States, in fact — to offer regional training and resources to utilities, manufacturers, and researchers in the membrane industry. It is modeling itself after established membrane operator programs in Texas and Florida, two states with large concentrations of membrane plants.

One of its first activities will be a 1- or 2-day workshop on membrane-based treatment processes at a water utility in Southern California. The training session will be run by volunteers from among SWMOA’s member agencies.

Join SWMOA Today!

A nonprofit organization, SWMOA is currently seeking new memberships. All members are entitled to a newsletter, published materials, and discounted rates at SWMOA workshops and seminars.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Mehul Patel at mpatel@awwd.com. Applications for memberships may also be downloaded at the Southern California Salinity Coalition’s website at www.socalsalinity.org/swmoa.