



## SIGN OF THE TIMES

Kevin Maine | Program Specialist



During my travels throughout the state, I am seeing more help wanted signs. Where are they and who is advertising? Like the picture to the left, the CVS warehouse is advertising \$14.00, no experience necessary. Surprisingly, the NYSDOT has help wanted signs posted at their roadside rest areas. I have even

seen the help wanted signs at the gates of many DPW and school bus garages.

No industry appears to be immune from the employment shortage, including our trade. Over the next five years it is estimated that our industry will be losing over 50% of our current workforce thru retirement. I believe the retirement exodus has already begun! When talking with Water and Wastewater Operation Specialists, many say they are already on countdown to retirement. Typically, most have less than a year of service left.

Many small systems are already losing a large talent pool; more commonly called "brain drain". I know of several operation specialists who have returned to the workforce, assisting communities who cannot find certified operation specialists. The wastewater and drinking water industries have a varied and talented workforce. Even with the SOPs, we all know it is difficult for anyone to walk in and start operating a water or wastewater system.

We've all heard the buzz about sustainability. Succession planning and employee training is a critical part of sustainability. What to do? New York Rural Water has developed a Water and Wastewater Apprentice Program. We have received accreditation from the New York Department of Labor and will be officially starting November 1, 2019. Our program will train and prepare

new hires for certification, train current employees for initial certification or advance certification for current employees.

If you are interested in the Apprentice Program please give us a call or email. We will be pleased to stop in and explain the program. You can contact myself or Valerie by phone at (888) 697-8725 or (518) 828-3155. Kevin Maine at extension 140 or email [maine@nyruralwater.org](mailto:maine@nyruralwater.org) or Valerie Ogden at extension 150 or email [ogden@nyruralwater.org](mailto:ogden@nyruralwater.org) 💧💧

