

# NEW YEAR, NEW "WE"

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By Jonathon Barnes

With a New York State springtime comes all the opportunities for a "New year, new me." We hear it every year from many. For all the municipalities it should be a similar statement of, new year new "WE." I mean that in terms of newfound collaborations. Time to look at the past year and what alterations we can make moving forward to grow professionally, educationally, and collaboratively.

Professionally, WE should all be moving towards a safer and healthier work environment that brings each other up. The last few years have been tough on everyone no matter your circumstance. Some recover well, while others DO NOT! Collectively we need to help each other get through the hard times that aren't visible through work efforts. Some folks come to work everyday to get away from their stresses, even as stressful as workdays can be. It's easy to get in the mindset of "not my problem," but we must work with each other and sometimes a simple conversation or ear to vent to, is all someone may need to change the direction of their mindset. Being able to be a friendly coworker for +/-5 minutes a day can alter a whole crew's outlook on the tasks at hand and ultimately knowing there's someone to talk to can be one of the greatest influences you may be able to give your staff. Leaders lead, bosses point. Be the leader that CARES! It is THE difference. And you will see it in your own employees.

Educationally, WE all need to keep up with the upcoming trends of regulation. We all know that regulation very seldom is reduced. So simply ignoring it until you retire, or leave is a destiny for failure for your next upcoming operation specialist and yourself. Let's be proactive in the pursuance of our ability to bring safe clean drinking water to our customers' homes, and QUITE often to your own home for your family and others to enjoy. Attend the classes that you don't usually attend for fear of boredom or inadequacy. Go visit another local plant that has high-quality water that you may be looking to pursue. Let that operation specialist know what your plans are moving forward and ask how they achieved their quality through the tap. Take notes, be inquisitive, take in mind what may be the benefit for your community and system. With the copious grants available be sure to get help in appropriately applying for the correct grants and what is necessary to be eligible for the grants you need. Be diligent in your reading for your own educational needs!

Finally, collaboratively, WE all need to work together. I've stated this before in other articles about shared services. As a majority of our communities do not have a major revenue coming in every year and likely short staffed to maintain your whole village or town without a dedicated department to just water, you're likely strapped to budget constraints like most. I cannot recommend enough to BE A PARTNER to your neighboring communities, operation specialists, engineers, board members, and construction businesses. I can PROMISE you that there will be a time when you will NEED help! And your nearest neighbor

can be your best collaborative effort when you share services like equipment, manpower, inventory, and guidance. It is one of the most effective ways to achieve a full support system when times of need arrive. The systems that I know of that utilize shared services collaborative, share a common prize. They are NEVER lacking in the NEED department. Utilizing all of their sources there is nothing they cannot handle, repair, or MANAGE together.

Let's all take 2023 as the new "WE" instead of the new "me." Be there for each other because if there's one thing 2020 has taught us... it is that we can NEVER be sure of what will happen, but with preparedness and working together we can all get through anything! 💧💧



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