



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

John O'Connell, III | NYRWA President

Wow...where to start? Our association recently saw two great people leave their respective positions in July and August. First, longtime friend and Board Member Steve Freeman from Boonville. Steve joined the board in June 1995 and has served as Secretary/Treasurer, Vice-President and President. However, his contribution to this association has always been his experience, calm demeanor, and his interaction with our members. His 25 continuous years of service will be truly missed. Personally, I will miss his wisdom and his support in the future.

Second, Valerie Ogden, our Office Manager/Training Coordinator, decided to retire effective July 1, 2020. Valerie started full-time with the association in March of 1996 after a short stint as a part-time employee. Valerie has been a leader in our recertification training, home study courses, annual conference, and our apprenticeship program just to mention a few of her many accomplishments. These "shoes" will be very hard to fill.

Both Steve and Valerie are simply outstanding people and will be missed by all, and I wish them the best in the future!

Now, we are all facing the challenges of Covid-19. If and when this virus comes to a close, we will all be paying for this in the years to come. From the economics to the changes in social distancing ourselves, personal protective equipment, and workplace hygiene, these modifications will alter our daily activities, time and finances. In my opinion, this will bring greater changes than 9-11. Our industry will see changes in the form of protective clothing to restrictions of having visitors at our plants. I also believe that we will eventually see more testing at our plants for Covid-19. I hope not, but time will tell.

In closing, we chose this profession, we rise to changes and challenges, and we adapt and overcome these hurdles. That is why water and wastewater operations specialists are heroes in my book! Thank you one and all. 💧💧