



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

John O'Connell, III | NYRWA President

I'm writing this article just after the heat wave the week of July 15. WOW...it was hot! Just think about what is to come in December, I prefer to take the heat over that any day!

Recently I traveled to Fort Lauderdale and met with the new Undersecretary of Rural Development, Mr. Joel Baxley. This opportunity was at the National Rural Water Association In-Service training, which is an annual training event for all of our USDA funded positions. Mr. Baxley's experience in water and wastewater is limited, however he appeared very interested in learning more. He was eager to visit with some of the Circuit Riders that were at the In-Service Training, and I'm certain he learned from their expertise. It was an opportunity for him to speak with the people who see and work with our small systems throughout the country. What a great opportunity for Mr. Baxley to hear firsthand what small systems are facing.

I left Fort Lauderdale and traveled to Colorado Springs for the NRWA Executive Board Meeting for three days. Several matters

were discussed at this meeting, and some new items will be brought before the full board in September. One item that I will share with our membership is that Sam Wade, NRWA CEO, will retire in June of 2020. As the longest sitting member of the NRWA Board, Sam and I have known each other for more than twenty years. I will miss him as a leader, and more importantly as a friend.

On July 29th, I travelled to Duncan, Oklahoma, for new board member training. National Rural Water provides mandatory training for all new board members to the National Association Board, and at the individual state board level as well. Opportunities to attend this training for individual state board members also takes place at the Water Pro Conference. In September we will meet with EPA Administrator Wheeler. This will be the first time National Board Members will meet with such a high ranking member of EPA. In closing, I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer and are prepared for the winter months ahead. 💧💧💧