

## Highlights

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# ITLA

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## Message from the President

*By Chris Wakefield*

Today's economy is certainly a challenging marketplace for business in the environmental industry. More specific to most of us whose focus is environmental laboratories, the initial question is, "How are laboratories surviving?". Well, I guess the answer to that may be specific to each laboratory and what steps they are taking to counteract the effects felt by today's economy.

Different approaches are taken to stabilize laboratory revenue. Over the last year, in our region alone, we have seen laboratories being acquired, staff adjustments, fluctuating sample numbers, but in general, laboratories seem to be surviving if not profitable. What was that, profitable? If you're not one of the profitable labs, you may be asking why and how is this being done. Simple, by effective leadership and management. This requires reviewing every aspect of the laboratory from beginning to end. Is the laboratory floor plan, internal processes and staff

designed for maximum efficiency?

This would include the analytical laboratories, data review and reporting departments. Is client services doing their job and servicing the clients and are the clients content? Are the metrics for the company being met in terms of turnaround times and expedited analysis? Are consumable costs and overtime being kept to the projected figures? Are your company quarterly goals realistic and does the staff support the concept to attempt to reach the goals? These are just a small sampling of the questions that can be asked that will indicate how your laboratory is performing. If many of your answers are no or I'm not sure, then it may be time to review all departments and make adjustments to increase efficiency. Believe me, the effort in making these small adjustments will add up to a substantial saving.

At the same time, there is increased pressure to "cut corners" in the QA/QC level of effort. This pressure must be resisted. Sacrificing quality for the sake of

## *Quarterly Meeting*

Wednesday, September 17, 2008, Waters Corp. in Milford, MA

**Feature Presentation:** "Environmental Solutions" *Mr. John Martin, Waters See page 5 for agenda*

economics diminishes the integrity of your laboratory and has a negative impact on our entire industry.

Lastly, several laboratories recently have changed their pricing structure. The trend over the last several years has been sustained or decreased pricing. Recently, several laboratories have justified a price increase between 5% -10% as a cost of doing business. This has been accepted by clients and this trend of increasing prices is positive for our industry and will give stability. Remember, as you contemplate the above statements with regards to your laboratory, what the last question needs to be is, are your clients happy with your laboratory performance?

## MWRA Items

By Mike Delaney, [mdelaney@mwra.state.ma.us](mailto:mdelaney@mwra.state.ma.us)

### Update On MWRA TRAC.IS and LIMS

MWRA's new Pretreatment Information Management System (PIMS), formerly known as TRAC.IS, went live in August. This commercial, off-the-shelf system was configured to address MWRA's unique needs for enhanced data management capabilities in the MWRA's Toxic Reduction and Control section. Labs using the eSMART system to report industrial self-monitoring discharge data were informed in July that this transition to a new electronic reporting system was imminent. For additional information, please contact Alice Chang, Data Management Supervisor, (617)-305-5621, or e-mail her at [alice.chang@mwra.state.ma.us](mailto:alice.chang@mwra.state.ma.us). Thank you again for your cooperation with this switch to the new reporting system. We hope you find it easy to use and an improvement in the data submittal process.

MWRA's Lab is working closely with its new LIMS vendor, LabWare ([www.labware.com](http://www.labware.com)). The Go Live date for the new LIMS is expected to be in late 2008 or early 2009. The current LIMS and TRAC.IS have been in use for over fourteen years and are in need of updates due to changes in computer technology.

### TAP WATER DELIVERS! MWRA Mails Annual Water Quality Report (6/9/08)

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority has

begun mailing its Annual Water Quality Report to every household in its service area. The report is required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and updates consumers on last year's water quality test results.

MWRA & the local water departments test thousands of samples each week and, of the 120 possible contaminants tested for, MWRA met every standard.

This year's report highlights the environmental benefits and low cost of tap water compared to bottled water.

"Sure, bottled water is convenient when you're on the go and is a healthy alternative to soft drinks," said MWRA executive director Fred Laskey. "But in dozens of taste and quality tests here and across the country, the only area where bottled water and tap water differ significantly is cost. At less than a penny a gallon, tap water is the cleanest, safest, and most cost effective alternative."

In the latest round of testing, the MWRA system was again below the Lead Action Level with the lowest levels ever. Recent tests have also shown that there are no traces of pharmaceuticals in the drinking water supplied by MWRA.

MWRA distributes the report to over 800,000 homes in 40 cities and towns. Community-specific inserts also provide information about municipal water systems. The reports are being mailed between now and June 27, 2008. Look for it in your mailbox.

The report is also available on-line at [www.mwra.com/annual/waterreport/2007results/2007results.htm](http://www.mwra.com/annual/waterreport/2007results/2007results.htm). A large-print version is available upon request and a Spanish version will also be available soon.

### MWRA Settles Dispute With EPA, Disagrees With Claims (7/1/08)

On July first the US Environmental Protection Agency released a statement claiming that the settlement of an administrative dispute with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority will result in a "higher level" of wastewater treatment at Deer Island.

While the matter has been settled, MWRA disagrees with the fundamental premise of EPA's claim that 22 billion gallons of wastewater did not receive adequate treatment between 2001 & 2005, & that EPA is now

responsible for a change in the treatment process.

Since the outfall came on-line in 2000, every gallon of wastewater leaving Deer Island received treatment. And, in fact, MWRA has consistently met stringent water quality standards. The quality of the discharge has been better than predicted and is twice as clean as the limits established by EPA itself.

The fact of the matter is that the improvements to the treatment process were completed by MWRA in 2005 – on its own and without any directives from EPA - after a series of multi-million dollar upgrades were made to the plant.

Because the Deer Island Treatment Plant serves combined sewer communities, it was designed and permitted with the understanding that, at times, wastewater receiving only primary treatment would be “blended” with secondary treated flows and disinfected, as long as the final blended discharge met secondary permit limits. This is how the plant is supposed to work and MWRA “blended” flows as recently as last Friday, and will continue to do so during high flow conditions.

From day one, MWRA has made no secret of how it operates the Deer Island plant. EPA receives detailed monthly reports describing MWRA’s operating practices and their results. MWRA was under the assumption that EPA had been reading these reports.

MWRA’s settlement of this claim is purely a business decision and is in the best interest of MWRA ratepayers, instead of a costly legal battle.

EPA initially threatened MWRA with a fine of over \$80 million. But after three years, MWRA has negotiated a settlement which includes a payment of \$305,000 and three projects with a value of \$305,000 which will provide additional environmental benefits to Boston.

The Boston Harbor clean-up is widely recognized as one of the nation’s true environmental success stories. Teams of scientists constantly monitor the MWRA’s outfall discharges. The results of all of these studies confirm that Boston Harbor has recovered quickly and that Massachusetts Bay remains healthy and environmentally vibrant.

## **MWRA Water - Supply And Demand**

MWRA and the Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) keep a daily watch on reservoir levels at Quabbin (412 billion gallon capacity) and Wachusett (65 billion). While Wachusett levels are kept relatively fixed, Quabbin levels fluctuate with precipitation and watershed runoff.

Ware River stream flows are also watched daily to determine if seasonal transfers to Quabbin during high-flow periods are possible. To gauge current system status, water supply planners have identified six reservoir status conditions that allow for normal monthly fluctuation.

The Quabbin/Wachusett system is so large that it can withstand short- and medium-length droughts and dry periods without a significant impact on its operating levels.

Demand on the MWRA Waterworks system was 214.21 million gallons per day (average) in 2007. Information on water use, system yield, watershed precipitation and levels of the Quabbin Reservoir are tracked on a daily and monthly basis. Based on a detailed analysis of major factors affecting water demand, MWRA projects that system demand will remain well below 300 million gallons per day.

**Safe Yield:** MWRA’s source reservoirs, the Quabbin and Wachusett, can be counted on to safely provide about 300 million gallons per day (mgd) of water. This is called the “safe yield.” For a 20-year period from 1969 to 1988, the customers of MWRA (and its predecessor MDC) routinely drew more than the safe yield. The chart above (“Historical Withdrawals”) demonstrates this historical trend. Fortunately, precipitation was great enough throughout these years to avoid a major water supply crisis. To address this problem, MWRA launched an aggressive water conservation program in 1986. By 1989, withdrawals had been brought below the safe yield, where they have remained ever since. This reduction in average water use was achieved through:

- Vigorous leak detection and repair efforts on MWRA and community pipes
- Retrofitting 370,000 homes with low-flow plumbing devices

- A Water Management Program for area businesses, municipal buildings and nonprofit organizations
- Extensive public information and school education programs
- A change in the state plumbing code requiring new toilets to be 1.6 gallon per flush
- Meter improvements that helped track and analyze community water use
- New water-efficient technology that has created reductions in residential use
- Water pipeline replacement and rehabilitation projects throughout the MWRA and community systems.

**Water System Storage:** MWRA's two source reservoirs can store 477 billion gallons of water for everyday use. Actual levels fluctuate.

- Quabbin Reservoir: 412 billion gallons
- Wachusett Reservoir: 65 billion gallons

MWRA stores treated water in covered tanks across its service area. Water can also be drawn from the Ware River if needed.

- Norumbega (Weston): 115 million gallons
- Nash Hill (Ludlow): 25 million gallons
- Carroll (Marlborough): 45 million gallons
- Fells (Stoneham): 20 million gallons
- Loring Road (Weston): 20 million gallons
- Arlington (Arlington): 2 million gallons
- Bear Hill (Stoneham): 6 million gallons
- Bellevue (Boston/West Roxbury): 3.7 million gal.
- Deer Island (Boston/Deer Island): 2 million gal.
- Turkey Hill (Arlington): 2 million gallons
- Walnut Hill (Lexington): 2 million gallons

There is more detailed information at [mwra.com/04water/html/wsupdate.htm](http://mwra.com/04water/html/wsupdate.htm).

**Visit our web page for more information**

Check us out at [www.mwra.com](http://www.mwra.com). We have a wealth of information for both the public and for experts on our water and wastewater activities. This includes monthly updates on drinking water quality testing, information on lead, our most recent Consumer Confidence Report, and many technical reports associated with the Deer Island Treatment Plant and our extensive Harbor and Outfall Monitoring program.

## Regulatory Update

By Bob Bentley, [bob@h2otest.net](mailto:bob@h2otest.net)

### Lab Certification Program

At the June meeting of the Laboratory Advisory Committee, we again worked on the language for a regulation change that would require laboratories to report MCL exceedances to the water supply (within 24 hours), and thereby to the DEP. You may recall that this was looked on as a possible "emergency" regulation change back in March. Since we still have not seen anything, we have surmised that this was not the emergency it once was.

### eDEP

We have been told by DEP that the Assistant Commissioner has made requiring more electronic reporting a high priority. He initiated two major projects: making the printout something that water departments can easily read, and making the sharing mechanism much easier for all to use. Unfortunately, based on very recent discussions with eDEP personnel, we have seen no movement on these issues.

We must note however, that there continues to be saber rattling that this is to be mandated sooner rather than later (some are now suggesting 2009). The ITLA has been consistently pushing back, telling the eDEP personnel that they must address the priority projects before this gets any closer to becoming a requirement.

(See **Update** on page 5)

calendar

**Sept. 17, 2008**

ITLA Quarterly Meeting  
Milford, MA  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Dec. 10, 2008 - Tentative**

ITLA Quarterly Meeting  
Milford, MA  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**July 19-21, 2009**

NY/PaAAEL Annual  
Convention & Exposition  
Location - TBD



# ITLA Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Waters Corporation

5 Technology Drive Milford, MA 01757

Phone: (508) 478-2000

For directions: See Attached File

9:00 a.m. Meeting Begins

9:15 a.m. Committee Reports

Secretary	Technical
Newsletter	Lab Advisory
Election	Membership
Ethics	Treasurer
Regulatory	By-laws

9:30 am Environmental Solutions

*John Martin, Waters Corporation*

This presentation is an overview of the components which are involved in environmental methods (sample prep, vial selection, chromatography, etc.) and how each can be optimized for improved performance. Examples will include EPA Methods as well as emerging contaminants such as Pharmaceuticals in Drinking Water and Perfluorinated Compounds (PFOS/PFOA).

10:30 am Break

10:45 am Tour of Waters Facility

12:00 am Meeting Adjourns

**EPA Will Not Regulate 11 Contaminants in Drinking Water:** EPA has decided that that no regulatory action is necessary for the following eleven contaminants: boron, the dacthal mono- and di-acid degradates, DDE, 1,3-dichloropropene, 2,4-dinitrotoluene, 2,6-dinitrotoluene, EPTC, fonofos, terbacil, and 1,1,2,2-tetrachloroethane.

[www.epa.gov/OGWDW/ccl/reg\\_determine2.html](http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/ccl/reg_determine2.html)

Update  
From Page 4

**PPCP:** It is our understanding that Commissioner Laurie Burt was before the Legislature to give testimony about pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCP). It was intimated that the Legislature *may* come up with some legislation to require additional testing (by no means a done deal!).

On all of these, stay tuned!!! We will be able to update you at our upcoming meeting with news from the Sept. Lab Advisory Committee as well as the Safe Drinking Water Act Advisory Committee meeting. If you know of other regulatory issues or have any other items we should be watching, please contact me or any member of the Executive Committee.

## Regulatory News

*Information Provided by Jerry Parr, Calibrate*

### Literature References to Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in the Environment

EPA has published a 500 page document listing references for related to PPCPs. [www.epa.gov/ppcp/citations20080828.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ppcp/citations20080828.pdf)

**EPA Publishes Guidance on Holding time for Hexavalent Chromium -** EPA's Office of Water has issue guidance surrounding the preservation & holding time for hexavalent chromium in water. [www.epa.gov/waterscience/methods/update/questions-cr6.html](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/methods/update/questions-cr6.html)

**New Method for Analysis of Hydrazine in Drinking Water -** An isotope dilution gas chromatography/chemical ionization/tandem mass spectrometric method was developed for the analysis of hydrazine in drinking water. The method detection limit was 0.70 ng/L for hydrazine in reagent water samples, fortified at a concentration of 1.0 ng/L. Mean recoveries were 102% with a relative standard deviation of 13.7%. Hydrazine at 0.5-2.6 ng/L was detected in 7 out of 13 chloraminated drinking water samples but was not detected in the rest of the chloraminated drinking water samples and the studied chlorinated drinking water sample. *Anal. Chem.*, 80 (14), 5449, 2008