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President's Message: Aaron Ausen

Friends of WOWRA,



This has been a whirl wind quarter for WOWRA. First and foremost I have to point out our management change. Some of you may know that we had to say goodbye to Katie Boycks last month. The three groups, WOWRA, WPCA, and WLWCA interviewed three different groups and came to a decision to move our groups over to Morgan Data Solutions. Although we are still in the infancy stage of our groups working together, I have been really happy with the transition and the early stages of MDS running our ship. I am sure that Heather and Alison would like to speak more about themselves so I will not delve too much into them, but I see this change only helping WOWRA run a more efficient organization, hopefully grow our membership, and allow George to concentrate on happenings at the capitol.

Speaking of such, most of you have heard that under Gov. Walker's proposed budget for next year a few changes were proposed to change how we do business. One was the elimination of the Wisconsin Fund and the second was to transfer the POWTS program from DSFS over to DNR. Many of you voiced your strong discontent with one or both of these issues. I am very pleased to announce that the Joint Finance Committee voted in favor of WOWRA on both items. It appears for now that DSFS will keep the POWTS program and the Wisconsin Fund will stay intact. I will let George expand on this in his section, but I only want to thank George for all he did and thank you, the membership, who called their representatives, went to listening sessions, wrote letters, and did what they could to fight this. I think we really made a huge impact for as small of a group as we are, we really let the capitol know who we are and what we want. If you get a free second, call or email George and thank him. I know this is what we pay him for, but really it was his tireless work that made this outcome a possibility. Also thank Rick Apfel, who worked hard with George on strategizing and making connections with other groups to form our coalition. This was a team effort and I am really proud of the WOWRA membership for all they did.

Lastly, the season seems like it's off to a good start. We were fortunate with good weather early and hopefully it holds for the whole year. I hope everyone is geared up and ready to start digging. In the words of the great Darryl Waltrip, "Boogity, boogity, boogity! Let's go racing boys!"

Sincerely,

Aaron J Ausen

President --WOWRA

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PLEASE NOTE:

The mailing
address and fax
numbers have
changed.



OSHA® FactSheet

Confined Spaces in Construction: Sewer Systems

Confined spaces can present conditions that are immediately dangerous to workers when such conditions are not properly identified, evaluated, tested, and controlled. This fact sheet highlights many of the confined space hazards associated with sewer systems and how employers can protect workers in these environments.

OSHA has developed a new construction standard for Confined Spaces (29 CFR 1926 Subpart AA)—any space that meets the following three criteria:

- Is large enough for an employee to enter it;
- Has limited means of entry or exit; and
- Is not designed for continuous occupancy.

A space may also be a **permit-required** confined space if it has a hazardous atmosphere, the potential for engulfment or suffocation, a layout that might trap a worker through converging walls or a sloped floor, or any other serious safety or health hazard.

Fatal Incidents

Confined space hazards in sewer systems have led to worker deaths. Several tragic incidents in sewers have included:

- A worker who lost consciousness and died when he climbed into a sewer vault to retrieve a tool. His co-worker also died when he attempted a rescue.
- While repairing a natural gas leak, a worker entered a drainage pipe to retrieve survey equipment. The natural gas ignited, killing the worker.

Training

The new Confined Spaces standard requires employers to ensure that their workers know about the existence, location, and danger posed by each permit-required confined space, and that they may not enter such spaces without authorization.

Employers must train workers involved in permit-required confined space operations so that they can perform their duties safely and understand the hazards in permit spaces and the methods used to isolate, control or protect workers. Workers not authorized to perform entry rescues must be trained on the dangers of attempting such rescues.

Safe Entry Requirements

The new Confined Spaces standard includes several requirements for safe entry.

Preparation: Before workers can enter a confined space, employers must conduct pre-entry planning. This includes:

- Having a competent person evaluate the work site for the presence of confined spaces, including permit-required confined spaces.
- Once the space is classified as a permit-required confined space, identifying the means of entry and exit, proper ventilation methods, and elimination or control of all potential hazards in the space.
- Ensuring that the air in a confined space is tested, before workers enter, for oxygen levels, flammable and toxic substances, and stratified atmospheres.
- If a permit is required for the space, removing or controlling hazards in the space and determining rescue procedures and necessary equipment.
- If the air in a space is not safe for workers, ventilating or using whatever controls or protections are necessary so that workers can safely perform work in the space.

Ongoing practices: After pre-entry planning, employers must ensure that the space is monitored for hazards, especially atmospheric hazards. Effective communication is important because there can be multiple contractors operating on a site, each with its own workers needing to enter the confined space. Attendants outside confined spaces must make sure that unauthorized workers do not enter them. Rescue attempts by untrained personnel can lead to multiple deaths.

Confined Spaces in Sewer Systems

Types of sewer systems include sanitary (domestic sewage), storm (runoff), and combined (domestic sewage and runoff). Sewer systems are extensive

and include many different components that are considered confined spaces, including pipelines, manholes, wet wells, dry well vaults, and lift/pump stations. Therefore, employers conducting work in sewer systems will likely have workers who will encounter confined spaces.

Sewer systems also consist of wastewater treatment plants, where confined spaces include digestion and sedimentation tanks, floating covers over tanks, sodium hypochlorite tanks, and wastewater holding tanks, among others.

Many of these components may also qualify as permit-required confined spaces.

Employers must take all necessary steps to keep workers safe in confined spaces, including following the OSHA Construction Confined Spaces standard. This standard applies to both new construction within an existing sewer and alterations and/or upgrades. For example:

- Installing or upgrading a manhole.
- Altering or upgrading sewer lines.
- Making nonstructural upgrades to joints, pipes, or manholes.
- Demolition work.
- Installing new or upgraded pump equipment, cables, wires, or junction boxes.

Construction work can create confined spaces, even if there are none at the start of the project. Changes to the entry/exit, the ease of exit, and air flow could cause a space to become confined or permit-required.

Hazards Associated with Sewer Systems

Sewer systems can present a host of confined space hazards, including:

- Atmospheric hazards (low oxygen, toxic or flammable gases).
- Chemicals in piping and from roadway runoff (may harm lungs, skin, or eyes).
- Engulfment and drowning.

- Electrocution (e.g., using electrical equipment in wet working conditions).
- Slips, trips, and falls.
- Falling objects.
- High noise levels, low visibility, limits to communication, and long distances to exits.

Personal protective equipment: Employers should assess the work site to determine what personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed to protect workers. Employers should provide workers with the required PPE and proper training on its use and about any related hazards before the work starts.

How to Contact OSHA

For questions or to get information or advice, to find out how to contact OSHA's free onsite consultation program, order publications, report a fatality or severe injury, or to file a confidential complaint, visit www.osha.gov or call 1-800 321-OSHA (6742).

Additional Information

[OSHA's Confined Spaces in Construction standard \(29 CFR 1926 Subpart AA\)](#)

[Confined Spaces: OSHA Construction Industry Topics by Standard](#)

[OSHA Fact Sheet: Procedures for Atmospheric Testing in Confined Spaces](#)

[Confined Spaces: NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topics Page](#)

State Plan Guidance: States with OSHA-approved state plans may have additional requirements for confined space safety.

Help for Small and Medium-Sized Employers: OSHA's On-site Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to businesses nationwide.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: 1-877-889-5627.

For assistance, contact us. We can help. It's confidential.



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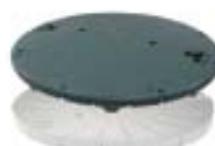
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Legislative Update: Executive Director George Klaetsch



Major Victories for Septic Trades in 2015-17 Biennial Budget!

In early February the WOWRA Board of Directors and full time staff were faced with a very significant task – defeat not one, but two budget proposals included in Governor Walker's 2015-17 Biennial Budget proposal.

The first proposal was to eliminate the Walker proposal to move all staffing, oversight and responsibility of the POWTS program from the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This was significant because traditionally if the political party that controls the majority of the legislature is the same as the Governor, the legislature almost always approves the Governor's proposal to reorganize state government responsibilities.

The second proposal came with a hefty price tag and given the fiscally conservative approach of the current legislative majority, associations would be hard-pressed to have one dollar reappropriated to the WI Fund, let alone over \$4 million. But that was the second challenge, convince the Legislative Joint Finance Committee to reject the Governor's proposal to eliminate all funding for the WI Fund and re-invest the traditional \$4 million.

Shortly after the budget was introduced in early February, the WOWRA, WLWCA and WPCA board's met individually with full-time staff to devise a strategy and tactics to overcome and defeat the POWTS program transition from DSPS to DNR and elimination of the entire WI Fund Budget. The result was a winning strategy that combined membership education and mobilization, coalition development and engagement, grassroots advocacy and boots on the ground lobbying.

I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT YOUR ASSOCIATION WAS RESPONSIBLE IN ENSURING THE POWTS PROGRAM WILL REMAIN UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE DSPS AND THE WI FUND WILL RECEIVE A MAJORITY OF ITS TRADITIONAL FUNDING! CONGRATULATIONS!

Each component mentioned above was an asset to our success and made an impression with the targeted members of the legislature's joint finance committee. It was also rewarding and reassuring to hear multiple legislators exclaim, "I actually was contacted by a member of yours from my district requesting that I oppose the DSPS to DNR transition of the POWTS program." or, "requesting to not eliminate funding of the current POWTS program." For that level of engagement from our members I can only say, THANK YOU!!

I would also be remiss if I didn't thank our coalition partners for their effectiveness in following our direction and leadership. The following were participants in the coalition we created – WI Realtors Association, WI Builders Association, WI Water Well Association, Plumbing Heating and Cooling Contractors Association, WI Counties Association, WI Towns Association and WI County Code Administrators Association.

While there are many battles that remain during the remainder of this legislative session, it is nice to be able to reflect on the two most significant budget/legislative victories achieved during my four year tenure as Executive Director. Thanks again to the entire membership for their confidence and support of our legislative efforts. I look forward to working with all of you to ensure many more legislative victories in the years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Klaetsch".

George Klaetsch

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Association Management Update

WOWRA News

MDS Association Management came on board April 1, 2015 to run the day-to-day activities of WOWRA. George Klaetsch will continue as Executive Director and handling the lobbying activities of the association.

We are excited to meet and work with the board of directors and the association members. Heather Dyer, CAE and Alison Huber, CMP will be your account contacts.



Heather L. Dyer, CAE is the Managing Partner of MDS Association Management/Morgan Data Solutions, LLC, a consulting firm providing data and web solutions for associations, not for profit and small business. Before starting her own firm in 2001, Heather spent eight years in the association field providing technology assistance. Over 30 Wisconsin associations have utilized her services to plan and implement their data infrastructure. This includes work process flow, training of employees, report writing and infrastructure support. In today's market technology, resources and people are ever changing. Morgan Data Solutions, LLC provides stability in the process. Heather holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science with an Accounting Minor from Western Illinois University.

How I give back and keep in touch with being a volunteer:

- Village of Cottage Grove - Finance and Personnel Committee Member
- Village of Cottage Grove Police Commissioner
- Legend Lake Channel Cruisers Snowmobile Club Treasurer
- Monona Grove High School Show Choir Treasurer
- Madison Breakfast Rotary Club - Board Member



Alison Huber, CMP is the Account Manager for WOWRA, as well as WPCA and WLWCA. She brings a strong background in meeting and event management as well as board service to the group. Prior to joining MDS in April 2015, Alison worked for the Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau as a sales manager. She also worked for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards and the State Bar of Wisconsin planning meetings, events and conferences before joining the Bureau.

How I give back and keep in touch with being a volunteer:

- Meeting Professionals International, Wisconsin Chapter - Immediate Past President
- Madison College - Meeting and Event Management Program
 - Part-Time Instructor and Advisory Board Member
- Pioneer Athletic Booster Club - Treasurer
- Pioneer Youth Club - Volunteer Basketball and Volleyball Coach

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To advance the education of and to protect and promote the profession of onsite wastewater technology in Wisconsin on behalf of our membership.