

Industry News You Can Use

A Legislative Victory for Our Industry!

Governor Evers signed WI Act 67 into law earlier this year. This is a victory that WOWRA and the Wisconsin Liquid Waste Carriers Association have been working on for over two years. The POWTS – related items highlighted below will be implemented in the next couple of months and will provide resources, services and relief to POWTS-related businesses and customers over the next few years and possibly beyond.

Special thanks to everyone involved and particularly the following who were especially engaged - providing testimony, making calls, or meeting with legislators. Every bit helped!

Lance Petrasek Mark Wieser Rick Walter **Brendon Reichard** Alan Kaddatz **Todd Stair** Sheri Guyse **Kevin Stange** Chris Johnson

Senate Bill 64 – now Wisconsin Act 67 does the following:

- Extends the sunset date for the private on-site wastewater treatment system (POWTS) grant program from June 30, 2021 to June 30, 2023;
- Requires the Department of Safety and Professional Service (DSPS) to prepare and provide residential POWTS eligibility literature and fund a study recommending ways to mitigate ground and surface water contamination risk from septage; and
- Provides two full-time program revenue project positions to assist with permit processing, review of POWTS programs in governmental units responsible for regulating such systems, and training and informational programs.

SEPTEMBER 2021

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Contact Us: WOWRA PO Box 833 Germantown, WI 53022 Phone: 888-782-6815 Fax: 888-287-4116 info@wowra.com www.wowra.com

Industry News

While we are happy to report on progress on the **plan review** front this Summer, we are always interested in hearing you feedback and ask you to keep us posted about how things are going. There have been a number of comments regarding changes in DSPS policy, particularly related to choosing your plan reviewer. Call or email the WOWRA office or contact any of our Directors with additional information.

NOWRA currently has four openings on our board starting in November 2021. Terms are three years and include equal representation from the various sectors of the onsite industry. Current openings are:

Regulatory Installer Service Provider Supplier/Manufacturer

If you are interested and/or have questions, contact the WOWRA office and we'll connect you with NOWRA leadership.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the INVEST Act, HR 3684, a more than \$700 billion proposal, which includes the text of HR 1915, the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021. HR 1915 was included as part of Division H of the INVEST Act. The vote on final passage was 221-201, largely along party lines.

This legislation helps address the need to increase funding for water infrastructure, address water workforce development needs, improve resilience to climate change, increase system sustainability, and improve environmental equity for all Americans.

Of importance to the septic is that the House package would create the Decentralized Wastewater Grant Act to help homeowners install and replace decentralized wastewater systems by authorizing \$100 million of annual funding for this program for Fiscal Years 2022 – 2026, for a total of \$500 million.

The US Senate overwhelmingly passed S. 914, the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act, (DWWIA) in April by a vote of 89-2 which provides \$35 billion over 5 years. The Senate bill included similar language to establish the Decentralized Wastewater Grant Act and authorized \$250 million in funding over 5 years for the program. The House and Senate will now begin negotiating a final agreement based on the two bills, which will be possibly included in a major infrastructure package later this year.

Industry News cont.

It was kind of a bumpy ride this year with changes to soil tester licensing. Soil Tester licenses expire on June 30 of any given year and you will no longer receive a postcard to remind you of expiration. You will receive an email if you have one entered into eSLA.

Check your license expiration by going to this website: https://esla.wi.gov/publiclookup

Renew your soil tester license by going to this website and logging in: https://esla.wi.gov/PortalCommunityLogin

If you haven't logged in on eSLA before, use the "First Time eSLA User" side and click on "DSPS Customer" and enter the correct information when prompted. Additional information about this and other renewals can be found HERE.

Wisconsin Fund – A Reminder

While most of you are familiar, it's helpful every now and again to provide a reminder about the Wisconsin Fund, a program that provides grants to homeowners and small commercial businesses to help offset a portion of the cost for the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing failing Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS). WOWRA has worked hard over the last several years to continue and increase allocations to the Wisconsin Fund and to review the eligibility requirements.

Currently, eligibility is based upon several criteria, including household income and age of the structure. 67 counties out of Wisconsin's 72 counties, the City of Franklin, and the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin participate in the program. County government officials assist interested individuals in determining eligibility and in preparation of grant applications.

More information is available by clicking **HERE**.



Don't Take the Bait from Phishing Scammers

In our modern world, the use of emails as a primary form of communication has become the norm. But with this comes the risk of cyberattacks that prey upon you and your employees who use email in increasingly clever ways.

Phishing emails are sent by scammers to try to gain access to basic information from users. Once they have this, they may be able to infiltrate your email, I.T. network, bank account, or other accounts. Even the use of spam filters may not be enough to catch every phishing email that tries to sneak into your inbox. So, what can be done to keep your business's information and accounts safe?

Know what to look for. Phishing emails can be very convincing. They might seem to come from friends, family members, coworkers, authorities, or even use familiar logos to appear similar to companies you trust. But if you look closely, there are generally ways to tell if they are legitimate. A few things to keep an eye out for may be:

- Typos and grammar errors
- Incorrect or mismatched email addresses
- Generic signatures
- "Too good to be true" claims or offers of large rewards
- False invoices
- Fear tactics, such as urgent calls to action, suspicious activity, or failed log-in attempts
- Asking you to confirm or fill in personal information

It's important to note that legitimate companies generally have domain emails, won't ask for sensitive information, and don't send unsolicited attachments. Their links will match legitimate URLs, and they won't try to trick you into clicking on anything.1

Add extra layers of protection. Make sure to look into the use of anti-virus software and ensure it is up to date. Also, consider the use of multifactor authentication, which requires two or more credentials to log in. If a scammer were to convince an employee to fall for a phishing scam, multifactor authentication can help make it more difficult to successfully get into that employee's accounts.

Back up important data on a regular basis in case the worst were to occur. This is a good practice in general, but can be especially helpful to keep your records and documents in safe standing should the originals be compromised.

Report phishing attempts. If you or your employees have successfully identified a potential phishing email, report the message and delete it from the inbox right away. Most email hosts have an option to report spam and block specific email addresses. If you are questioning the validity of an email, take a moment to read it carefully and look up any keywords or identifying notes that could lead you to make an informed decision. And, if you suspect you clicked on a bad link, take action right away by contacting your information security department.

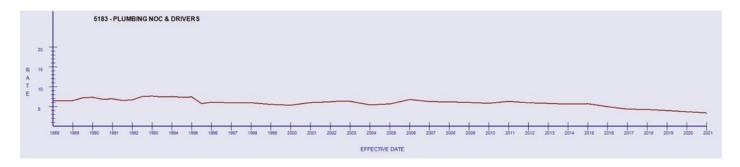
Phishing emails could put you and your business in danger. When in doubt, be wary of suspicious emails and don't take the bait.

This article is for general information and risk prevention only and should not be considered legal or other expert advice. The recommendations herein may help reduce, but are not guaranteed to eliminate, any or all risk of loss. The information herein may be subject to, and is not a substitute for, any laws or regulations that may apply. Qualified counsel should be sought with questions specific to your circumstances. ©2021 Federated Mutual Insurance Company.

Workers Compensation Rates to Change

Rates for Workers Compensation policies renewing after October 1, 2021 have been updated. Across all industries, a rate reduction of 5.4 percent was approved by the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance. For the construction industry group, rates will decrease 5.44 percent, though rates for various trades within the larger group will vary.

The rate for class code 5183 – Plumbers will drop from \$3.69 per \$100.00 of payroll to \$3.39 per \$100.00 of payroll, a reduction of a little more than 8 percent. The rate for plumbers has been steady or declining for more than 30 years. The amount paid per employee is affected not only by the rate, but by growth in the wage classification.



Contractor Premium Adjustment Program

If your company meets the following criteria, you should be applying for the Wisconsin Contractor Premium Adjustment Program (WCPAP), which reduces premiums paid by higher-wage employers (whose employees are compensated above the level of the maximum weekly WC disability benefit payment).

WISCONSIN CONTRACTOR'S PREMIUM ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Must have current worker's compensation insurance coverage.
- Must have at least one contracting classification.
- Pay a minimum average hourly wage of \$30.62 to contracting employees for credits effective 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022.
- 50% of payroll or premium must be in the contracting operations of the business
- Must be commonly owned by a separate entity that meets all of the above requirements

If you are eligible (or not sure), be sure to discuss this program with your WC insurance provider.

Renewals

It's fast approaching time to renew your WOWRA membership. Dues statements will be sent in October and November.

When you receive your statement, consider the following reasons for renewing!

- Continued work with Speaker's Water Quality Task Force, advocating for additional staff for POWTS plan review and continuation of the Wisconsin Fund.
- Held Wisconsin's premiere Septic Professional Joint Winter Conference in Wisconsin Dells.
- Sent updates to members related to COVID-19, including availability of loans and grants as well as compliance with new legislation affecting small businesses.
- Worked to have all aspects of our industry service, new construction, commercial and residential and all of our supply chain to be deemed "essential."
- Actively participated on the POWTS Code and Technical Advisory Committees.
- Worked with the DSPS on POWTS plan review times during peak months.
- Held a webinar, led by DSPS staff, to make it easier to work with the new eSLA system.
- Welcomed a State Senator and Representative to a member jobsite to explain POWTS, our impact on the economy, and the importance of quality installation and regular service to protect the environment.
- Expanded our newsletter and legislative communications to members.
- Planned a POWTS Evaluator program, Code program, and Soils program, with more planned for 2021, including our first group of online courses.

Join WOWRA!

Not a member? Now's a great time to join! Our membership application can be found on page 7.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- Discounted rates to WOWRA-sponsored conferences and CE Programs.
- Receipt of WOWRA newsletter.
- Discounts on WOWRA guides for owners of private onsite wastewater systems.
- Government Relations updates to keep you informed of new laws and regulations.
- A voice representing WOWRA and the industry before Regulators and Legislators.
- Networking opportunities with peers.



2021 WOWRA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

STOP! For faster service and to pay by credit card, please register & pay on-line at <u>www.wowra.com</u>.



MEMBERSHIP RATES PLEASE NOTE: Approximately 25% of your annual WOWRA dues are spent on lobbying related issues. This 25% may not be deducted from your taxes as a business expense. Please contact your tax consultant for further information. \$230 (1 person) \$115 (unlimited) \$75 (State dues only) \$110 (State + NOWRA Dues) Full Member Employees of a Company with a Full WOWRA member. Govt. Personnel or those with indirect interest

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POWTS Evaluator Certification Training



POWTS Evaluator Certification Training

Presented Live (Via Zoom)
Four Consecutive Tuesdays
November 30 and December 7, 14, and 21
3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

PURPOSE

This course provides training for onsite professionals on the **proper techniques for conducting evaluations of existing private onsite wastewater treatment systems.** The course creates much-needed uniformity for inspections, helping **to reduce liability for those doing POWTS evaluations**. Topics include: POWTS Evaluator ethics and requirements; Evaluator/client relationship and responsibilities; evaluation procedures (data collection through final reports); and procedures for evaluating recent, documented POWTS, as well as the "unknown" POWTS. General POWTS knowledge and experience is necessary.

Upon course completion (attendance at all four classes is required), you will take an examination. Upon passing the exam, you will receive certification as a WOWRA Certified POWTS Evaluator.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Continuing Education Credits will be available for the following credentials:

JM Plumber

- POWTS Inspector
- Commercial Plumbing Inspector

- JM Plumber-Restricted (S)Master Plumber
- POWTS MaintainerSoil Tester
- DNR Septage (Applied For)

- MP Restricted (S)
- Soil

···· Nestricted (s)

INSTRUCTOR

Todd Stair is an experienced POWTS instructor who has 30 years of experience in the POWTS industry and holds licenses/certifications as a Master Plumber Restricted Service, Certified Soil Tester, and POWTS Inspector.

REGISTRATION FEES

\$350.00 WOWRA Members*

\$500.00 Non-Members**

Includes class, certification exam, and educational materials.

Registration deadline is November 23.

Cancellation fee of \$50.00.

Presented Via Zoom. Internet Connection Required.

Class size is limited to 30.

* Must have paid 2021 dues.

WOWRA | PO Box 833 | Germantown, WI 53022 | Phone: 888-782-6815 | Fax: 888/287-4116 | info@wowra.com

^{**} Save \$150 on the class by becoming a WOWRA Member! See wowra.com for information.

POWTS Evaluator Certification Training *cont.*



Registration Form

POWTS Evaluator Certification Training

Presented Live (Via Zoom) Four Consecutive Tuesdays November 30 and December 7, 14, and 21 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

\$350.00 WOWRA Members* \$500.00 Non-Members**

| Company | |
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| Address | |
| City/State/Zip | |
| Telephone | |
| Attendee Name 1 | |
| Email (required): | |
| Provide related licenses/certifications you currently hold and your license number(s): Additional Attendee (copy this form to register more attendees) | |
| Email (required): | |
| Provide related licenses/certifications you currently hold and your license number(s): | |
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| | TOTAL AMOUNT DUE (for all attendees) \$ |
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Submit with Full Payment to WOWRA | PO Box 833 | Germantown, WI 53022

WOWRA | PO Box 833 | Germantown, WI 53022 | Phone: 888-782-6815 | Fax: 888/287-4116 | info@wowra.com

Upcoming Seminars

More seminars are on their way for this training season!

Introduction to **POWTS and Design Basics**, a two-day, in-person program presented by CeCe Rudnicki (DSPS). Date and location to be announced soon!

In addition, a **web-based version of the Introduction to POWTS** that we presented earlier this year will soon be available for online credit. Look for the announcement when the courses are available!

Joint Winter Conference 2022

It's not too early to mark these dates for our Joint Winter Conference for 2022:

Joint Winter Conference Thursday, January 14 – Friday, January 15

Chula Vista Resort Wisconsin Dells, WI

We'll have keynote speakers, breakout session, an exhibit hall, and networking events, all planned with YOU in mind. Come for one day or come for both. Extend your stay on Friday and enjoy some time with your family too! Chula Vista offers great value, a huge waterpark, one of the best steakhouses in America, and more. Hold the dates and look for more information mid-year....

POWTS Updates are being held monthly via Zoom. Each update will provide 1 hour of continuing education credit for most POWTS credentials. The sessions will be free to attend but you must pre-register so you will receive a link to the meeting.

Find a brochure with topics, dates, times and registration information linked here: 2021MonthlyPOWTSUpdatesBrochure.pdf. Information can also be found on the DSPS website here: https://dsps.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/POWTS/Default.aspx

Contact CeCe Rudnicki for more information 608-400-3186 or elizabeth.rudnicki@wisconsin.gov

By the Numbers

4

Percentage increase in construction industry employment opportunities through 2029 (according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

89

Percentage of contractors that are still having trouble finding help according to an AGC of American survey of 2,100 construction companies.

9,210,000

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the number of job openings as mid-Summer was about 9.21 million, the highest number since records have been kept (2000).

15

The percentage increase, year-over-year, in the price of an existing home in the U.S.

About Half

The number of homes sold above the asking price during the past several months.

90/17

The number of homes for sale that sold in less than 30 days was just a touch above 90 percent. The average length of time from listing to sale was 17 days.

0.6 and 20.8

The percentage *decrease* in 11 commonly used construction inputs between July and August. Year-over-year, however, these same inputs have *increased* by 20.8 percent.

Looking for Jobsite Stories – Both Good and Bad



To be clear, we're looking for good stories about both good and bad installations....

We're constantly looking for ways to improve our association and one of those ways is to increase the relevance of this publication. To that end, we're looking to include more feature stories about projects

NOWRA Benefits

At WOWRA's Annual Meeting, we had the opportunity to information about national developments affecting hear about the many things that NOWRA - our national association – is doing to support our industry. Here's a partial list of what they do to support us all. We encourage you to learn more and be a part of both your State and National associations.

Representation in Washington and in Your State

NOWRA is working to secure legislative and policy changes which foster expanded use of onsite and decentralized technology and which can help the industry address the policy, management, and financial issues caused in large part by neglect at the federal level. In 2014, NOWRA established a strong lobbying presence in Washington intended to increase our industry's share of new construction from 30% to 35%, secure more federal funding to address challenges facing the industry, and get EPA to change policies which discriminate against our industry.

Septic Locator

Every NOWRA member receives a free listing on the <u>Septic Locator</u>, the only national, searchable directory of providers of onsite wastewater management industry research, How-to manuals, regulations, services. Your listing is controlled by you -- you can change contact information, services offered and other information in real time. Coming soon you will have the chance to enhance your listing as well.

Errors & Omissions Insurance for Designers and Inspectors.

NOWRA partnered with The Powderhorn Agency, to endorse their Errors and Omissions insurance coverage for Septic Systems Designers and Inspectors. If your design or inspection work is primarily residential, you may find this coverage to be significantly less expensive than similar coverage from your insurance carrier.

Pro-Sept Residential Septic Repair and Replacement Plan

You can help your customers protect themselves against catastrophic septic repairs or system replacement by recommending they consider the **Pro-Sept warranty** program. You help yourself at the same time, as NOWRA members earn \$30 for each customer referral.

Onsite Journal

NOWRA has resumed publication of the Onsite Journal magazine. This 4-color magazine offers useful onsite wastewater, reports from state affiliates and industry vendors, and updates on NOWRA programs and services of interest. Published quarterly.

Continuing Education Opportunities

NOWRA has established the Installer Academy as the national educational entity for the decentralized wastewater industry to ensure that quality training programs are available for all industry practitioners. By participating in NOWRA's Education Programs, members gain a learned foundation that continuously builds personal and professional opportunities. NOWRA has an extensive Online Learning Academy, a continuing education option for members to obtain the CEUs they need to stay in business. All of NOWRA's online courses have been approved for continuing education credits in Wisconsin!

Resource Library

NOWRA's Resource Library is intended to be a one-stop portal to help you identify critical information online which can help you manage your business. Published financing, public outreach materials, and archived training materials are among the valuable items contained in this always growing library.

Onsite Wastewater Mega-Conference

Since 2015, NOWRA has held its annual conference in conjunction with various state affiliates organizations, teaming up to offer the Onsite Wastewater Mega-Conference -- the largest national conference and trade show solely dedicated to onsite wastewater business. For details on recent Mega-Conference's visit NOWRA's Education and Training section on the website.

Leadership

NOWRA provides all members with opportunities to have a voice in its affairs. Whether you express that by voting in NOWRA's Board of Directors elections, participating in our Annual Meeting, commenting on proposals, volunteering your time on a committee or task force, or simply sharing your views with a board member, NOWRA welcomes and encourages your involvement in our activities. The greater the involvement of its members, the stronger our industry becomes, and the better we are able to work to positively shape its future.



Proclamation

WHEREAS, proper septic system use and routine care are vital to protecting public health, preserving our highly valued groundwater, lakes, streams and waterways, and avoiding costly repairs that can result from neglect; and

WHEREAS, more than one in five households depend on septic systems to treat wastewater from homes and businesses; and

WHEREAS, wastewater professionals of NOWRA use their expertise in the design, installation, maintenance, research, outreach and/or regulation of septic systems in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's SepticSmart program used by NOWRA does educate homeowners about the need for proper septic system use and routine maintenance; and

WHEREAS, homeowners and the environment benefit from properly designed, installed, operated, and maintained septic systems;

NOW THEREFORE, we the Board of Directors of the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association do hereby proclaim the week of September 20-24, 2021 as **SepticSmart Week** and we urge all people to join us in this special observance.

Signed this 23rd day of June 2021,

Sao 7. degan

Sara Heger, PhD, NOWRA President







NOWRA Cont.

Still Time to Register and Save

Attendee and Exhibitor Registration is ongoing for the **2021 Onsite Wastewater Mega-Conference.** This is the largest national onsite/ decentralized wastewater event of its kind that offers industry professionals the highest quality education and training available so you won't want to miss it.



The 2021 event is being held October 17-20 in San Marcos, Texas.

Attendee registration for the 2021 Mega-Conference includes options for Full Conference registration; One-Day registration; discounts for NOWRA, NAWT, SORA, and TOWA members; and optional events such as a choice of two onsite wastewater field trips (high strength waste and reuse) and an off-site social event at the historic Gristmill River Restaurant.

Key shortcuts to important conference information are listed below:

Opening Session
Conference Agenda
Attendee Registration
Hotel Information
Exhibitor Registration

Attendee Registration

Exhibitor Lineup

Many exhibitors have already booked their booths for the 2021 Mega-Conference. Check out who is confirmed so you can make time to visit your favorite exhibitor or just roam the exhibit hall.

Exhibitor Information - including a layout of the current floor plan and listing of confirmed exhibitors.

Hotel

The cut-off date to reserve overnight rooms at the San Marcos Embassy Suites at the conference rate is September 25, 2021. Book your room now by visiting the <u>Hotel Information</u> web page before rooms fill up.

To find out more about the 2021 Mega-Conference including agenda, registration, and hotel information, visit the Mega-Conference web page.

COVID-19

We are concerned about the health and safety of all of our staff, volunteers, and attendees. We are closely monitoring the COVID situation and are committed to take the appropriate precautions and protocols to be able to hold a successful and safe conference.

Online Training Opportunities Approved for Credit in Wisconsin



Whether you are new to the onsite/decentralized industry or continuing your professional development, you have come to the right place for septic system related education!

Taught by experts in the industry, NOWRA's Academy offerings cover the fundamentals of the profession as well as advanced training in multiple topics. Offerings include those developed from a national perspective and those meeting specific state requirements.

The courses included can be taken at a discounted rate as a WOWRA/NOWRA Member or at a higher rate as a Non-Member of NOWRA. You can become a member of NOWRA by joining WOWRA.

These courses have been approved for DSPS continuing education for master plumber, journeyman plumber, master plumber restricted service, journeyman plumber restricted service, commercial and UDC plumbing inspector, POWTS inspector, POWTS maintainer, and soil certification tester.

Available course are shown below. You can receive credit for each unit or for the entire program. Find out more at https://www.pathlms.com/NOWRA.

Treatment Overview (1.5 Hours Credit)
Wastewater Characteristics (1.5 Hours Credit)
Soil and Site Evaluation (1.5 Hours Credit)
Soil Based Gravity and Pressure Distribution (1.5 Hours Credit)
Pumps and Controls (1.0 Hours Credit)
Operations and Maintenance (1.0 Hours Credit)
A to Z Overview (8 Hours Credit)

Order Your Septic System Operation & Management Booklets

Order Form

WOWRA Homeowner's Manual

The WOWRA Homeowner's Manual is a great tool for onsite professionals to provide customers with information on their septic system!

The manual includes information on septic system operation and management and provides answers to frequently asked questions.

Manuals are available for purchase for \$1.00 per manual plus shipping (varies by quantity).

Questions? Contact the WOWRA office at 888/782-6815 or info@wowra.com.

| Septic System Operation & Management |
|--|
| Information for Homeowners |
| WowkA Wisconsin Onsite Water Recycling Association |
| Dedicated to protecting your health and environment. |

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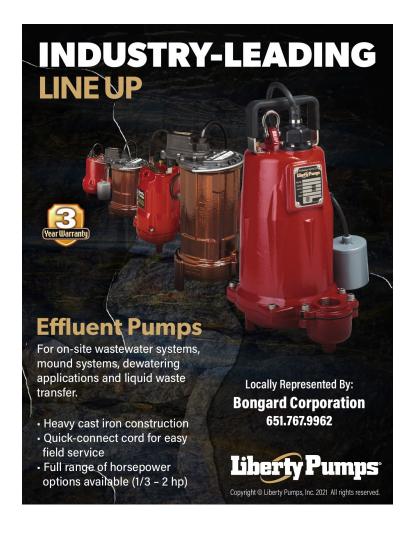


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Mission Statement:

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